

*washington college review*




*a liberal arts journal*





# Washington College Review



The *Washington College Review* is a liberal arts journal that seeks to recognize the best of undergraduate student writing from all disciplines of the College and to publish work deserving of wider availability to readers in the College community and beyond.

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## A Word from the Editor



When I returned to Washington College as a professor, I had one question about the changes on campus since my 1990 graduation: did WC still offer a high quality liberal arts education to the students who chose to come here? My inquiry was answered almost upon arrival – the kids, as they say, are all right.

One of the great joys of teaching is seeing how the students respond to, reject and embrace the world in which they are living. Certainly, since 9/11, our students have observed their culture in ways that we didn't have to – their world is radically and frighteningly different. There may be an undercurrent of fear, but WC students are also in possession of a welcome sense of community, of purpose and, most importantly, of humor. I've discovered that they reveal these traits both in and out of the classroom, and, most importantly, as they follow Washington College's emphasis on writing, in the words they put to paper.

Whether the works included in this issue of the *Review* were written for Dr. Moncrief's Shakespeare class, or Dr. Sherbondy's Anthropology class or Professor Maloney's Women Playwrights class or written one night in the Town Hall or for a collaborative research project with Dr. Shad, these writings truly reflect the best of the best. They reveal a student body that is striving to put their observations into a context, for the edification and amusement of their peers. Their ability to contextualize is perhaps the greatest outcome a liberal arts education can provide. George would be most proud.

As a dramaturg and a professor, I've found that the liberal arts walk hand in hand with the spirit and art of collaboration. This issue of the *Review* has been a truly collaborative endeavor. I would like to thank Meredith Davies Hadaway for the not-so-gentle nudge, Diane Landskroener and Marcia Landskroener for layout and editorial guidance, Dean Scholz for

advocacy and the Wednesday night crew for perspective. I am indebted to our editorial team for their terrific insights: Katherine Cameron, Kate Moncrief, Jennifer O'Neill, John Seidel and Kathy Wagner. Bob Mooney gets high marks for his devotion to publishing this remarkable journal. And where would we be without the dogged talent of our student editor, Kate Amann?

The Washington College students who are published here have learned their liberal arts lessons well – I look forward to reading their work in the years and decades to come. Keep your eyes open for their future work.

Michele Volansky  
Editor, *Washington College Review*





# Old Testament and an Old Man

*Will Grofic*



His blue hat resembles the Alabama sky—  
we're underneath a campsite before Canaan.  
He sleeps in an Air Stream, I in a tent.

Paul's shuffleboard skills aren't divine  
on the hopscotch concrete numbered wrong.  
His wrinkled skin is a thumbprint.

Paul piloted the Mississippi River for 30 years:  
as he tells river stories, my eyes walk across,  
awestruck at Moses' power over the Red Sea.

Paul led me into stories that crisscrossed  
other stories that confused Moses for three days  
in the desert, their compasses held no arrow.

"You got many of them Muslims up by you?"  
Paul waves a hand over his Christian land,  
"Cesspools, they bringin' their cesspools over."

He pounds his stick into the ground twice,  
Moses' staff brings the Waters of Meribah  
and Paul's disk lands in the "OFF" zone.

My disk smoothed across the surface, onto an 8,  
silently Paul muttered a loss of Canaan,  
a loss that Moses had suffered before him.

It was an Old Testament God that held my thoughts  
vengeful, all powerful, saddened in my mind  
by us humans, the chosen animal.



# Gum Underneath the Desk: A Finger Away

Will Grofic



Gum underneath the desk is an unheralded rebellion  
from the distant trash can, from the alien and alienated teacher  
and from facts unwanted of lessons unlearned that are crammed  
so deep, so forceful without care like a wet willie  
from a hefty bully who doesn't understand you are not  
making fun of his weight, you'd just like feeling back in your foot.

Too often, documented rebellion ends in tragedy,  
too often the first step on the moon brings conspiracy.

Gum underneath the desk is a stale, exotic tap on the shoulder  
demonstrating in shoebox diagram detail a history  
like every time you spin the globe, your finger lands anew:  
the world stops in middle of Indian Ocean where you'll build New Atlantis  
because still you say in stubborn longing, "I will live *there* when I grow up."  
Not in spite, in admiration for the cartographers who color by number.

Too often gum's taste suddenly stops like fingers at an  
evolutionary saturated five, opposable thumbs creating wars.

The end of fingers contain nails, and Mrs. Hopkins drags  
those B-52s across the grassy green chalkboard, smiling suddenly  
like the gum hidden in my pocket all morning, fortifying  
its position till lunch where it armed itself with the flavor  
of a fallen peppermint leaf on the Canadian fresh floor we call  
earth because our floor is tiles, our desks newly cleaned.

Too often the end of a poem is sucked dry of its original tastes  
like the gum I put underneath her desk.



“In whom Love wrought new  
alchimie:” Inverse Alchemy in  
“A Nocturnall on S. Lucies Day”

*Jennifer Bockmiller*



Donne often used scientific fact to elicit a spiritual and ethical truth. But of all the scientific theory that Donne employed to mold his metaphysical conceits, none are further from modern thought than the medieval and renaissance science of alchemy. By the seventeenth century, however, alchemy had become more of a philosophical and religious activity than a scientific and commercial one (Mazzeo 122). While scholars are unsure from where Donne derived his alchemical knowledge, he frequently refers to Paracelsus, the medieval scientist and alchemist, in his prose (Duncan 258). In fact, his numerous references to alchemical imagery and extended alchemical metaphors suggest that Donne was interested in the idea of transmutation and quintessence, even if only allegorically.

But unlike Jonson who inundates his readers with an excess of alchemical jargon to achieve his satirical purpose, Donne uses select pieces of alchemical theory to illustrate or illuminate a piece of poetic thought. Although Donne also mocks alchemy theories in “The Sun Rising,” “The Dissolution” and “Love’s Alchimie,” his alchemical figures serve as deliberate and philosophical poetic devices. Alchemy aims not only at the physical transformation of regular metals into gold, but also with a spiritual purification and restoration. The parallels between the material and spiritual in alchemy seem contradictory,

but Donne in the same way connects seemingly unrelated elements in his conceits. For this reason, alchemy is fitting as a metaphysical poetic device.

In “A Nocturnall Upon St. Lucies Day, Being the Shortest Day,” however, Donne reverses the alchemical process of creating something from nothing. Instead of finding the elixir of all and reaching the quintessence of all being, as alchemy aims to do, the bereaved speaker finds Love as the elixir of nothingness, the quintessence of non-being. Grieving the loss of his beloved, the speaker is undone, distilled but never renewed, and deprived from the hope of resurrection. But “A Nocturnall” is a meditation on deep personal loss as well as a reflection of cultural transition in the seventeenth century. Just as Donne uses alchemical imagery to illustrate transformation and inversion, decay and regeneration within himself, he also applies this sense of change more universally. Considering the double nature of Donne’s metaphysical poetry and the dual purpose of alchemy, it is fitting to assume that Donne intended additional relevance of his poem set in a pivotal moment of change.

The title of the poem sets it on December 13, the former date of the winter solstice. The shortest day of the year places the poem on a pivotal point of “the year’s midnight.” It is both the darkest day and the beginning of renewing light. Although St. Lucy, blinded and later martyred, is often celebrated as a bringer of light as her name suggests (Britannica), Donne places her in a poem of total darkness. The speaker uses the darkness of this specific day and projects it upon his own dark melancholy. The sun shows itself only in flashes and the image Donne creates describes the decaying world as if in a vacuum. The irregular rhyme scheme and the harsh consonantal rhymes in “sunk,” “drunk” and “shrunk” intensify the miserable sinking feeling. Amidst Donne’s dismal tone and vacuum-like images, he uses scientific diction to begin his alchemical allegory.

The friar Roger Bachon lived and wrote in the thirteenth century, but his writing on alchemy is edited and reprinted in the seventeenth century (with additional comments). *The Mirror Of Alchimy* (1597) gives a detailed and involved description of the properties (both physical and spiritual) of various metals, the vessels involved in the physical process of alchemy defining the elixir, and the elusive philosopher’s stone. Throughout the process of distillation, the treatise emphasizes the importance of the Sun. A regenerative and perfecting power, the sun’s energy was thought to

grow seeds and flesh, also acting as the harnessed power in alchemical transmutation. In *The Mirror Of Alchimy*, Bachon writes:

Consider brother, the seed of the earth, wheron men live, how the heat of the Sun worketh in it, till it be ripe, when men and other creatures seed upon it, and that afterward Nature worketh on it by her heat within man, converting it into his flesh and blood. For like hereto is our operation of the masterie: the seed is such, that his perfection and proceeding consisteth in the fire, which is the cause of his life and death... and his spiritualtie, which are not mingled but with the fire. (Image 22)

The “masterie” to which Bachon refers is, of course, the fabled philosopher’s stone, which producing the elixir, would serve dual ends—transforming metal and transforming the soul—while the sun operates as the energy, God’s life-giving fire.

Acknowledging the sun as a life force, Donne intentionally removes it from his scene, the shortest day. According to Thomas Hayes’s article “Alchemical Imagery in John Donne’s ‘A Nocturnall Upon S. Lucies Day,’” this image of a withdrawn sun begins the unraveling of creation for the speaker.

Willfully suspending his disbelief in the exhaustion of the primal creative force, the original fire of God, the Promethean poet sits brooding in the dark, wondering how he can bring new fire to mankind. (Hayes 56)

Just as the alchemist distills the elements to their purest form, the speaker undergoes a similar undoing. In effect, the speaker is in the moment of transition between night and day, or death and life. It is through the poet’s force of creation, explains Hayes, that the poem begins the process toward regeneration. Donne, however, recreates nothingness, a complete inverse of alchemical quintessence.

In his article *John Donne’s Alchemical Imagery*, Joseph Mazzeo explains the links to Paracelsus and his ideas with which Donne was likely familiar. Paracelsus believed that the possibility of finding the great transmuting

agent, which he called a 'balme,' was bound up in the unity of all things. He believed that it resided at the core of things, like the seed of the Earth (Mazzeo 115). Yet again in inversion, Donne writes, "The general balm of the hydroptic earth hath drunk" (6), continuing the downward-pulling movement of the first stanza. In effect, Paracelsus' balm that retreats to the earth's center "appears in an image of a world as an organism which has lost the health-preserving substance" (Mazzeo 116). Even in this world where all life has been withdrawn, it is nothing compared to the speaker's deprivation; he calls himself the "epitaph" (9). In effect, he is deader than "dead and interr'd" (8) and even mocked by the decaying world. Interestingly, Donne, as poet, identifies himself with words. He distills himself to less than nothing and recreates himself only in words in the poem itself.

So Donne instructs us, "Study me then" (10), as he fully introduces his alchemical figure in the second stanza. He addresses young lovers, "At the next world, that is, at the next spring" (11), alluding to a cycle of life, but he seems somehow excluded from the circle of death and regeneration. He declares, "I am every dead thing" (12), the consummation of death. The alchemist Love has wrought in the speaker's case a new kind of alchemy. Instead of preparing the quintessence of all things, as alchemists traditionally aimed to do, this speaker experiences the quintessence of nothingness. The quintessence in alchemy is referred to as the fifth element, so perfect it exceeds creation (Willis 14). While the speaker does say that he is "re-begot" (17), suggesting creation rather than birth, he is re-created into non-being. Following in the theory of various created elements, he names his own anti-elements—"absence, darkness, death—things which are not" (18).

Furthermore, we see the connection of regenerative alchemy to seventeenth century medicine. Nicolas Culpeper's *The New Method of Physick* (1654) is a comprehensive discourse on alchemy in health that offers a physician's point of view on alchemy and its influence in the world of medicine. The elixir that alchemists believed to be the medicine of metals becomes also the medicine of man; it not only brought metals to perfection, but also healed diseases and prolonged life. References to the work of medieval scientist and alchemist Paracelsus serve as a launching

point for Culpeper's description of the "new physick." According to Culpeper, the primary end of alchemy is health:

The internal end of Alchymie is to reduce Compounded bodies into what they were compounded of: to cleanse, purify, and take away their malignant qualities. (Culpeper 23)

Culpeper refers to the "bodies" as both human and metal. While he ignores much of the spiritual implications of alchemy, his treatise asserts the transformation of sickness to health, and ultimately death to life. He continues to describe the double purpose of alchemical study:

for the change of and transmutation of ignoble metals into Noble...or secondly to maintain the body of man in, or restore it to health; and in this sense Alchymy ought to be joined with medicine. (Culpeper 23)

In a word, from alchemy we expect an elixir of life and restoring health; Donne, however, gives us death. His stark inversions and complete reversal of the alchemical process have an overall destabilizing effect; they beg to connect alchemical transmutation, both physical and spiritual, to a broader notion of transition.

The third stanza begins with a sense of drawing up and the repetition in "all" reinforces the totality of the poet's loss. Again subverting expectations, we know that this all is "of all, that's nothing" (22). The limbec, or alchemical still, is where the speaker undergoes his distillation from Love's new alchemy. In spiritual alchemy, the limbec is often used as a symbol for transformation of the soul: "the tortuous curvings of the retort tube was analogous to the hard path traveled by the soul in the process of purification" (Duncan 110). Love, or specifically the loss of love, is what has now ruined the speaker. The speaker realizes that the purest golden love is tainted by the sorrow and loss of a leaden world.

Then, Donne returns to his liquid imagery of the first stanza to describe how the shrunken world was once flooded by the two lovers: "Oft a flood / Have we wept, and so / Drown'd the whole world" (22-



24). Alchemical theory holds that no operation should be performed until all materials are reduced to their liquid state. Timothy Willis discusses at length in *The Search of Causes: Containing A Theophysicall Investigation of the Possibilitie of Transmutatorie Alchemie* (1616) the importance of “Depuring of liquids and Chymicall extractions” and “the cleansing by and with water” (15). The liquid state is the purest form for both the physical alchemist distilling the elixir and the spiritual alchemist purging the soul. In this respect, Donne’s mention of a “flood” not only calls to mind images of figurative baptism, but also of a primal chaos, as all things were first created in their purest form.

The fourth stanza is a meditation on the poet’s loss and the world’s decay. He is no longer a carcass, but rather “Of the first nothing the Elixir grown” (29). Culpeper’s notion of perfection now resonates with the distilled speaker, who has become the purest nothing. Hayes takes the argument one step further to suggest he is “reduced to the nothing out of which God presumably created the universe” (Hayes 57). In his state of non-being, he observes that he is neither man, beast, plant nor stone (30-34). As Mary Zimmer writes in “The Inversion of Christian Spiritual Resurrection,” he recognizes that “he belongs to none of the four levels of creation” (556). Having completely devolved, the speaker seems poised to undergo spiritual resurrection.

The speaker, does not, however, undergo such a resurrection: “But I am none nor will my sun renew” (37). Zimmer looks specifically at the use of alchemical imagery in “A Nocturnall” in terms of Christian resurrection. She writes, “Christ is often figured as the divine Sun/Son who does renew (both himself and others) through resurrection” (Zimmer 558). So, then, does the poem end with the speaker dismissing himself from the renewing power of God? Whether the poem ends in despair, hope or stasis is often disputed among scholars. His *carpe diem* message to the young lovers, “Enjoy your summer all” (41), does suggest cyclical rebirth, but he seems to exclude himself. As he “prepares towards her” (43), his muse S. Lucy, he recognizes that light of a “lesser sunne” will come (38), but not for him. “A Nocturnall” still ends at midnight, and in this darkest hour, we wonder if the hope for regeneration of the elements (as he refers to himself as creation) is as equally hopeless as the prospect of transmuting lead to gold. His final words link back to the first line of



the poem and resound a definitive end for the speaker: "midnight is" (45). Although "A Nocturnall" presents the total withdrawal of what Hayes calls "the primal power" from man, the speaker asserts a sort of existence in the end, declaring, "let me call / this hour her vigil, and her Eve" (44). Hayes writes, "This creative power, epitomized in alchemy, exists in the poet's creation, his 'logos'" (Hayes 60). While he may be reduced to nothing, that which remains is his poem. With a pun on Eve, the mother of mankind, Donne suggests a new type of creation in an imaginative form.

"A Nocturnall" is more than a bereaved lover's lament. Specifically, his inverted use of alchemy as a symbol of transformation and change parallels the anxiety and transition of the period. Mazzeo describes Donne as "caught up in the spiritual and intellectual confusion of his times" (123), explaining further how Donne's interest in alchemy was part of an intellectual trend. With religious change rapidly unfolding and scientific discovery booming, Donne would have found himself in the midst of the turmoil. As Mazzeo explains:

The man who cast off orthodoxy found himself face to face with a heterogeneous mass of ideas, all of them moving toward the reconciliation of matter and spirit. (123)

Just as alchemy attempts to bring together the physical and the spiritual, Donne's poem dabbles with the question of a culture in the same debate.

Furthermore, "A Nocturnall" uses alchemy to play off images of lightness and darkness, the transition between night and day. In this sense, the awaited rising sun on St. Lucy's Day also represents the world's reawakening. As Hayes suggests, in addition to grieving for a beloved, the speaker also finds himself grieving the passing of an entire world:

The poet's quest, then, is for meaning in a new world where God has become remote, where the man-oriented geocentric universe is being replaced by the heliocentric cosmos of the fire-worshipping astronomers. (57)

Typical of Donne and the metaphysicals, "A Nocturnall" destabilizes expectations through constant inversion. His "new alchemy" is set in

the moment of his beloved's shift from life to death, echoing the pivotal point of St. Lucy's Day, the winter solstice. He approaches the paradoxical relationship between love of the spiritual world and the physical world through the alchemy conceit, playing with the notion of death and resurrection. He calls to mind transmutation and perfection, and, most importantly, begs comparison to the fragility of social, cultural and religious transformation.

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# Modern Physics as Seen Through the Philosophy of Simone Weil and Three Contemporary Plays

Michael Ridgaway



For many people, “physics” provokes a sense of confusion and awe. The mere mention of the word can conjure images of incomprehensible equations and scientists speaking a seemingly foreign language while talking endlessly about subatomic particles and energy. This rift between physicists and the rest of society is something that has not gone unnoticed, specifically by the philosophical and playwriting communities. The philosophical work of Simone Weil regarding physics is one such instance of this, as are plays such as *Approaching Simone*, *Copenhagen* and *Proof*, all of which explore the relationship between physics, or at least high-level mathematics, with the rest of society. In *Approaching Simone*, Megan Terry explores the philosophy of Simone Weil regarding physics and society, as well as the ability of humanity as a whole to deal with concepts that Weil considered similar to physics. In *Copenhagen*, by Michael Frayn, the lives of two of the most influential physicists of the twentieth century, Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, are laid bare upon the stage. The play examines the decisions these men faced with regard to the development of the atomic bomb, along with the decisions they faced in their personal lives. Lastly, *Proof*, by David Auburn looks at the lives of mathematicians and how they relate to their loved ones and society. Although not necessarily physics, the math

involved in *Proof* conjures the same level of confusion many people envision when they think of physics, so a suitable correlation can be made between it and the other plays. In their own ways each of these plays reflects an aspect of the philosophy of Weil regarding the nature of physics with respect to humanity.

In her play, Terry explores the life of Weil, best known for her philosophical writing in the first half of the twentieth century. Deeply interested in the sciences, and particularly physics, Weil wrote much regarding her opinions on the state of contemporary physics research and humanity. This is explored in *Approaching Simone* in a scene where Weil sends a letter to her brother, himself a physicist, regarding the discovery of quanta and the mathematical description of entropy. In her letter, Weil asks her brother why it was necessary to use a discrete description of entropy as opposed to a continuous one. Entropy, which can be loosely defined as the measure of disorder within a system, is mathematically found by taking the natural logarithm of the probability of a very specific state, or microstate, within a larger system. When this calculation is performed, the entropy is found only for that specific state, making it a very detached mathematical calculation. Weil's question to her brother is why this could not have been explained in a more generalized way that would be more easily understandable; for example, where the entropy could be described for a variety of circumstances over duration of time. Weil also questions the fact that the discrete analysis of entropy was used as proof for quantized energy. This refers to the fact that energy from atoms is either absorbed or emitted in very distinct amounts, called quanta. In Weil's point of view, if it is possible to express entropy in a continuous way, then perhaps the proof for the existence of quanta that is introduced through discrete methods is faulty.

This line of questioning reflects a theme in Weil's works regarding the conflict between discreteness and continuity in science and their relation to humanity. According to Weil, the main problem with physics is that the science involved is completely removed from human comprehension. Without a way to connect one idea to the next, physics is unable to relate itself to human experience despite its importance in everyday life. Optimally, science would strive at all times to keep itself relevant to and integrated within the everyday lives of people. Modern science does not achieve this, however, causing a rift to emerge between science and society so that they become increasingly

removed from each other. *Approaching Simone* shows the effect such rifts can have on a human being. Although Weil's character remains the same over the course of the play, she endures a number of very distinct scenes portraying conflicts and trials that she experienced during various points in her life. Over the course of the play, the lack of continuity between successive events and the excess of continuous thought within herself lead her to turn completely inside of herself for understanding and consolation. The end result of this is the death of Weil, who is unable to reconcile the outside world with her sense of self. Although the consequences are not as severe in real life, *Approaching Simone* suggests that when disconnected experiences or information are forced upon a person, the ability of the person to understand and cope with these circumstances is diminished.

With physics and science, the weakening of comprehension is reflected in the modern attitude of much of society. In this case, though, it seems as if physics and science will perish in Weil's stead simply because it is much easier for mankind to leave physics behind than it is for physics to exist without human support. Unless scientists are able to find a way to blend continuity with discreteness, Weil sees the death of science as inevitable. This raises the question of whether the integration of science into normal human comprehension that Weil envisioned is even possible. Though she was well educated, Weil demonstrates in *Approaching Simone* that even she had difficulty understanding physics as explained by the physicists who presumed to be knowledgeable in the area. To solve this quandry it would either be necessary to have someone as an intermediary to filter scientific knowledge to the general public or to change physics, possibly even the whole of science, into a form that is more easily grasped and applied. But if Weil was not able to fulfill either of these prerequisites, what hope do the rest of us have? This issue is explored further in *Copenhagen* and *Proof*.

In *Copenhagen*, Michael Frayn explores the relationship between two prominent physicists and their mysterious meeting in 1941, during WWII. Werner Heisenberg, a former student of Niels Bohr, was working on the German atomic reactor project while Bohr, who was half-Jewish, was living in occupied Denmark. Bohr, considered one of the founding fathers of modern physics, had once been like a father to Heisenberg, but now that they are on different sides of the war, things are considerably different. In the play, the two physicists along with Bohr's wife, Margrethe, look back on that meeting

and the events surrounding the construction and the consequences of the first atomic bomb. The play forces people to look at these two men's personal lives, which ultimately become intertwined in the physics involved.

*Copenhagen* not only deals with physicists, but also, with the character of Margrethe, gives an example of a person forced to act as an intermediary between a brilliant physicist and the rest of the world. By focusing on those involved in some of the greatest scientific revolutions of the twentieth century, Frayn shows what happens when people are immersed in a science that is removed from normal human comprehension. In Frayn's play, Bohr and Heisenberg become obsessed with physics and begin to lose their humanity. This is shown primarily through their inability to connect with Margrethe, the only truly human character in the play. Throughout the play, Bohr is constantly attempting to explain their scientific theories to Margrethe. It is this intellectual arrogance, however, that ends up severing him from his wife and, through her, the rest of mankind. Heisenberg's character is no better in this respect. He is also unable to reach Margrethe, and is only able to connect with Bohr as long as physics are involved. Many of the arguments and conflicts in the play are resolved only when some issue of physics arises and Bohr and Heisenberg are distracted. What is happening, though, is that the problems that Bohr and Heisenberg are being distracted from are fundamental human problems, such as those concerning family, loyalty and the responsibility that each person has as a member of the human race. Their preference for physics shows a lack of human emotion as both choose to focus on something more detached. In the end, however, when these issues remain unresolved, the only character that seems to have any kind of certainty on the matter is Margrethe, who is able to see the situation in human terms. Bohr and Heisenberg are still lost and confused.

In this way, Weil's theme for the need of a vital connection between science and humanity is carried out in *Copenhagen*. With their lives centered on physics, Bohr and Heisenberg's perceptions of the world have become skewed. Without continuity between their world of physics and the emotional realities of the rest of the world, they are unable to make the necessary connections between the events of their lives and get to the truth of the matter between them. Instead, they let physical concepts and theories define their lives and their behavior. Bohr and Heisenberg have let physics determine who they are and are ignoring their abilities as human beings to make larger connections.



Margrethe, on the other hand, is able to see things for what they really are over the entire course of the play since it is she who relies on her humanity to define how she sees the world. Unlike the other two, Margrethe is able to see the connections between all that has happened and does not rely on distinct memories or complex theorems to define the entire situation.

Furthermore, the inability of Bohr and Heisenberg to reach any conclusion reinforces Weil's prediction of the eventual death of science due to its inability to relate to humanity as a whole. At the end of the play, the two men seem to be left without any hope of figuring out what has happened between them. Margrethe, however, remains true to her humanity and grasps the situation because she is able to blend her scientific experiences with compassion and other emotions. Her ability to analyze discretely and then connect allows her to see Bohr and Heisenberg for what they really are and the situation for what it really is.

Finally, Auburn's *Proof* shows the effect that high-level mathematics can have on people and their relationships and how it can be beneficial if integrated properly into one's life. Although *Proof* deals with math and not specifically physics, the high level of math involved provokes the same type of response in ordinary people as physics. In the play, Catherine, the daughter of a famous mathematician, has written a proof for a theorem that would effectively unite many different mathematical fields. She does not have much formal training in math, however, and others question whether she has actually written the proof or whether her father, Robert, wrote the proof during a lucid period. The main conflict of the play arises when Hal, Robert's former student and Catherine's romantic interest, and Claire, Catherine's sister, doubt Catherine's authorship of the proof.

In this play, the two characters that most represent the division between math and society are Robert and Hal. Robert can be seen as a direct symbol of the effects of styling one's life around a subject such as mathematics that acts contrary to normal human comprehension. In his youth, Robert was one of the greatest mathematicians in the world, and as such had to adopt the methods and ways of mathematics. With his mental illness, he came to embody the type of mental destruction present at the end of *Approaching Simone*, where the contrast between internal and external conditions had become too much for one person to bear. His actions became very random and disconnected, as seen in the dozens of notebooks filled with nonsensical writing he left

behind in a room. Only when he was with Claire was he able to display any type of connectivity in his thoughts, displaying the human quality inherent in interaction with a family member. Hal, however, displays the detachment of a mathematician through his inability to trust Catherine. Despite the fact that Hal and Catherine had expressed romantic interest in each other and had just spent the night together, Hal questions the authorship of the proof the following morning. These actions lack the fluidity that comes from compassionate human interaction and instead display a tendency to treat each new occurrence as a separate phenomenon, such as a mathematician might treat two separate problems. The resolution for these characters enforces the inability of math to cope with the rest of society, as Robert descends back into mental instability before his death after his brief period of lucidity, and Hal comes running back to Catherine willing to trust her.

Catherine, on the other hand, displays the combination of scientific comprehension and human understanding that Margrethe displays in *Copenhagen*. Her scientific reasoning ability is apparent in her ability to analyze situations, such as her reaction to Claire and Hal's distrust of her and her skill in math. Her ability to make connections, though, is what really sets her apart, since she has actually succeeded in making mathematics more understandable through her proof. She reflects the traits that Weil held in such high esteem, and in the end she becomes an example of what is possible if the analytic characteristics of math and the connective characteristics of human nature are combined. In this way Weil's argument comes through again, but this time with more hope for what can be achieved through scientific and social harmony.

In each of these plays the audience must make the necessary connections between the characters, the plot, and any additional stylistic implements and form an idea of the play and the concepts it presents. In this way, the playwrights themselves become intermediaries between science and the general public, and their success can be measured by what the audience takes away from the production. Some may be completely lost while some may have registered the message of the play but will not have the opportunity to apply it. Still others, however, may take what they have learned and attempt to view science and the world in a different light and then spread this learning to others. This is the kind of world Weil dreamed of, a dream most likely shared by the playwrights of *Copenhagen*, *Proof* and *Approaching Simone*.

These plays illustrate how society views the subject of physics and science as a whole. The ideas of Weil also find support in each of these works by displaying the necessity for continuity in physics and life. Although *Approaching Simone* leaves the question of whether blending the discreteness of physics with the continuity necessary for human understanding is possible, both *Copenhagen* and *Proof* show that it is a possibility. Whether such plays and philosophies will end up affecting change is uncertain, but it is evident that science must adapt to human understanding or fade away completely.



# Fifty-Thousand Chickens

Liam Daley



## CHARACTERS:

RUDOLF

EDWARD

TODD

## SCENE:

RUDOLF and EDWARD enter a men's room. They stand on the edge of the stage facing the audience, unzip, and pretend to hold. They will finish and wash up as they see fit.

RUDOLF: Hey.

EDWARD: Hey.

(pause)

EDWARD: So, how was your weekend?

RUDOLF: Well, my goat is pregnant.

EDWARD: Excuse me?

RUDOLF: My goat. It's pregnant.

(TODD, enters, unzips, and holds)

TODD: Hey guys.

RUDOLF: Oh, hey Todd.

EDWARD: What does that mean?

RUDOLF: It means that my goat is going to have a baby.

EDWARD: You have a goat?

RUDOLF: I have eight goats.

EDWARD: You have eight goats?

RUDOLF: Yup. Eight goats with one more on the way.

EDWARD: Why do you have eight goats?

RUDOLF: Well, I started with three but then I got a male.

EDWARD: No, no. I meant –

TODD: *(looks down)* Say any of you guys ever think about getting it pierced?

EDWARD: What?

RUDOLF: Pierced?

TODD: Or tattooed?

EDWARD: What? No. No, why do you ask?

TODD: Eh, I've been debating. You see, there's this ongoing discussion with my girlfriend . . .

EDWARD: She doesn't approve?

TODD: Oh no, she's all for it.

EDWARD: Oh.

RUDOLF: Wouldn't it leak?

TODD: I hadn't thought of that.

EDWARD: But you never answered my question.

RUDOLF: What?

EDWARD: I mean, where the hell do you keep all those goats?

RUDOLF: In Delaware.

EDWARD: Delaware?

RUDOLF: That's right.

EDWARD: And not here in the city?

RUDOLF: Well, I have a farm in Delaware.

EDWARD: You have a farm in Delaware?

RUDOLF: Well, it's a family farm.

EDWARD: I never knew you had a goat farm in Delaware.

RUDOLF: Oh, it's not a goat farm.

EDWARD: It's not?

- RUDOLF: It's a chicken farm.
- EDWARD: Oh, really?
- RUDOLF: Yes, we've got about fifty-thousand chickens out there now.
- EDWARD: Fifty-thousand chickens?
- RUDOLF: Fifty-thousand chickens and three roosters.
- EDWARD: Only three roosters?
- TODD: Say, any of you guys name yours?
- RUDOLF: At least I think it's only three.
- EDWARD: (to TODD) What? Todd, what the hell is wrong with you?
- TODD: Hey, I was just asking.
- EDWARD: Well, what kinda names are we talking about here? Like "Excalibur" or something?
- RUDOLF: Or "Hercules"?
- TODD: Or "Mighty Mouse"?
- EDWARD: Yeah, or – What?
- TODD: Yeah, that's what my girlfriend thinks we should call mine.
- EDWARD: You're discussing names? It's not a baby for God's sake!
- TODD: I've just been wondering what she meant by it.



EDWARD: Well Todd, I suppose she means that your penis is very small, but surprisingly powerful.

RUDOLF: But then again it might be four roosters.

EDWARD: I can't follow this conversation.

RUDOLF: We thought we had three, but maybe we have four. One of them is questionable.

EDWARD: Questionable? An androgynous chicken?

RUDOLF: You see, there's this one. And we *thought* it used to lay eggs, but now it definitely doesn't. And that might be because it's a male.

EDWARD: Well, can't you tell just by looking at it? Wouldn't the plumage indicate gender?

RUDOLF: Oh, no. None of the chickens have any feathers.

EDWARD: What?

TODD: Say, any of you guys ever think about shaving it?

RUDOLF: We've had them genetically engineered you see.

EDWARD: To be completely bald?

TODD: No, not completely. Just a little touch-up work.

RUDOLF: That's it exactly.

EDWARD: But why?

TODD: Well, for one thing it's more hygienic that way.

- RUDOLF: He's right, that's one reason.
- TODD: Plus, I've heard it makes it look bigger.
- EDWARD: What?
- RUDOLF: It's actually pretty common practice nowadays—
- TODD: So I'm given to understand.
- RUDOLF: — in the chicken trade.
- TODD: Huh?
- EDWARD: (*to TODD*) Oh, shut up!
- RUDOLF: What were you saying?
- EDWARD: I don't know any more.
- TODD: I only ask because I've been having this debate with my girlfriend.
- RUDOLF: So you said.
- EDWARD: Stop talking!
- TODD: She's been saying, "Well I keep mine all nice and short. You could at least do the same for me."
- EDWARD: I mean it!
- RUDOLF: And that's not even mentioning the sheep.
- EDWARD: What? No! No more sheep, ducks, pigs, emus, flying-squirrels, or ruby-crested throat-warblers! I can't even—

TODD: Say, any of you guys ever –

EDWARD: And none of that either! Todd, you need to stop letting your girlfriend control the fate of your penis. *(to RUDOLF)* And you need to learn that when the guy at the next stall asks how your weekend was, you just say fine and let him urinate in peace!

*(EDWARD exits)*

TODD: *(scoff)* What was that all about?

RUDOLF: I dunno.

TODD: Weird guy.

RUDOLF: Yeah . . .

*(Scene)*



# The Professor Speaks of Class

*Heather Ann Blain*



We plot ourselves according  
to our father's income and profession,  
draw wide black lines  
between narrow boxes

while the professor motions  
his chalk-dusted hands.  
"Socio-economic classes," he says,  
"rarely change."

I take notes,  
but remember a time  
my father came home,  
his suit pressed, his tie  
immaculately clean. His hands  
lay open by his sides.

At the bottom of the stair,  
my mother's voice drops.

He does not need to answer,  
only to turn his open palm.



# “And Dat’s De Way Dey Take Us In”: The Role of Music in the Gang-Labor System

*Johann Wahnnon*



Music was an important part of a slave’s life. Locked in a system of routine and work, music was interwoven into the system. Slavery changed music, molding it into a tool, much like a hoe or a plough. When the slaves worked in the fields, they sang call-and-response style work songs that helped assist them in their duties. Tasks that had to be coordinated were done through music. If the work needed to be paced it was done by the gang-leader singing faster or slower. Music also was a tool that the plantation owners tried to manipulate. Slaves were made to sing in the fields, as it helped increase the plantation’s productivity, served as a monitoring system, and helped propagate the belief that slaves were happy. Work songs that the slaves sang came to reflect the rigid structure, routine and control that engulfed their world. In spite of owners’ attempts to co-opt their music, slaves still found a way to make it their own. Work songs gave slaves hope, and it became a medium through which the slaves could express their feelings. Slaves used music as a tool to communicate to other slaves, and even to plan escapes. As much as a slave’s life revolved around work, it also revolved around music, and during slavery the two were closely intertwined.

Slave work songs had their roots in Africa. Hundreds of years ago, the indigenous peoples toiled rhythmically to songs in their native tongues. In the Kroo tribe, for example, these songs were particularly important. During times of war, the chief would gather his men before the battle and lead them in a war song, the purpose of which was to collect their strength and courage on the battlefield. Alone, the leader sang the first line, then as a group, the warriors sang the other line:

O that Great bird of War!  
Thou hast made this town silent.

This format was repeated until the song's conclusion:

O that Great bird of War!  
Thou hast made this town silent.  
They come, they come  
Creeping down low  
Among the tall grasses,  
The enemy came.<sup>1</sup>

The tradition of collective singing can also be found in other areas of Kroo culture. Music was used to help coordinate labor. To cut a stand of trees, the chief gathered his men and again led them in song:

Youthful tree!  
We must cut all around it  
Gala's tree!  
We must cut all around it  
Cawlaw, Cawlaw, Cawlaw, Cawlaw.  
We must cut all around it.<sup>2</sup>

As the slave trade brought these Africans to America, their musical traditions came with them. In the New World, work songs continued to be sung in the fields, but the music also adapted to the new environment.

In the South, the gang-labor system was one of the major reasons for the efficiency of the plantations.<sup>3</sup> One factor that helped make the gang-



labor system possible was music. Large numbers of slaves working in the fields needed to be coordinated to remain efficient. Like their ancestors, they labored in part by using work songs. These songs could be heard all across the South.<sup>4</sup>

The work songs that were sung by the slaves used the call-and-response method. In this structure a gang-leader called out a verse and it was repeated by the other slaves. The call-and-response system was composed of two main groups, an AB form and an AAB form.<sup>5</sup> In the AB form, a gang-leader outlined the theme of the song. One example is a song about rain. Without accompaniment, the leader sang the first line, which represents A:

It ain't a' gwine ter rain no mo';

Then the group as a whole sang the next line, which represents B:

It rained last night an' de night befo',

This call-and-response AB pattern continued for the duration of the song:

It ain't a' gwine ter rain no mo';

It rained last night an' de night befo',

Rabbit settin' in de jamb of de fence,

It ain't a' gwine ter rain no mo',

He's settin' there for de lak ob sense

It ain't a' gwine ter rain no mo'.<sup>6</sup>

The other style widely represented in the work songs is the AAB form. In this form a gang-leader called out a verse, but instead of singing a new line, the group repeated the leader. This typically continued for three lines and on the fourth line, a new idea was introduced into the verse:

O, what do you say, brother?

O, what do you say, brother,

O, what do you say, brother,

About this Gospel War?

Stay in the field,  
Stay in the field,  
Stay in the field,  
Until the war is ended.<sup>7</sup>

These songs had a practical function for the slaves working in the fields. This was particularly the case when it came to coordinating their work. During summer, much of the time was spent clearing land or pounding in fence posts. The work was rhythmic by nature, and by using these work songs the slaves were able to coordinate their labor.<sup>8</sup> Fannie Berry, an ex-slave, explains how it was done:

An' de woods jes' ringin' wid dis song. Hundreds of dem jes' asingin' to beat de ban'. Dey be lined up to a tree, an' dey sing dis song to mark de blows.

A col' frosty mo'nin',  
De niggers might good,  
Take yo'ax upon yo'shoulder,  
Nigger, TALK to de wood.

Fust de one chop, den his pardner, an' when dey sing TALK dey all chop together; an' perty soon dey git de tree ready to fall . . .<sup>9</sup>

Different songs were sung, depending on the number of slaves who were working on a project.<sup>10</sup> With this particular song there are six syllables to a line. This most likely meant that it was a song to coordinate the strokes of six workers. Each slave swung on a given beat. After the swing, the slave would reset and wait until it was his or her turn to swing again. This ensured that there were no mis-strokes, which protected their equipment and themselves.<sup>11</sup> The chart below explains how it might have been done. Each slave swung on a different syllable. For slave 2 it was col', nig, and yo'ax. On the last line each slave would reset on "Nigger," swing on "TALK" and then reset again on, "to de wood." This three-syllable break after the group swing enabled them to restart for the next verse.

Slave 1	Slave 2	Slave 3	Slave 4	Slave 5	Slave 6
A col'	fro	sty	mo'	nin'	
De nig	gers	mi	ght	good,	
Take	yo' ax	up	on	yo'shou	lder,
TALK	TALK	TALK	TALK	TALK	TALK

Not only did the music help keep the rhythm, but sounds of the work also became part of the song. With this song, the sound of the ax repeatedly hitting the tree acted like a base drum. Slaves would also vary the ax strokes to enliven a song and give it added character. The song Fannie Berry recalls has a loud dramatic group swing to mark the end of the verse. Combined with the slaves singing, the total effect often was very powerful. In cases where the slaves were not using any hand-held tools, they slapped their hands or stomped their feet in order to keep the beat going.<sup>12</sup>

Aside from coordinating the work, music was used to give instructions to the other slaves.<sup>13</sup> A field slave's day was consumed with work from sun-up to sun-down. The work was often grueling, and in the gang-labor system the slaves were forced to stay with the group. During springtime the work gang moved along a line, chipping out weeds with their hoes. At harvest, the gang worked the line picking cotton. Because of exhaustion, a slave could not work too fast. Working too slow, however, brought down the whip. Thus, a slave could die just as easily from overwork as from underwork. This meant that maintaining a steady pace was crucial, and it was done with music.<sup>14</sup>

To solve the problem of how fast the work should progress, a gang-leader was chosen to keep the pace. While working with the other slaves, a gang-leader called out a verse and the group repeated it. The faster the leaders sang, the faster the group moved; the slower the gang-leaders sang, the slower the work gang moved.<sup>15</sup> If the gang-leader saw that a member of the group was having trouble keeping up, or that the group was behind in the day's quota, he or she had the ability to adjust the speed of the labor.<sup>16</sup> If an opportunity also arose where the overseer was not watching, the gang-leader had the ability to communicate quickly to a large number of slaves that they could slow down. This gave the gang-leader a great deal of control over how the work progressed on the plantation.

Since so much depended on their musical ability, gang-leaders played a

vital role in the plantation system. An inexperienced gang-leader could throw off the timing of the whole group, bring down morale and severely impact the productivity of the plantation. Gang-leaders also were storytellers. The songs they chose to sing were a major form of entertainment for the slaves, and a good storyteller could go a long way in making the work go by quicker and easier.<sup>17</sup> Plantation owners soon found out that the better the song leader they had leading the work gangs, the more contented the slaves were and the more work that was done.<sup>18</sup> Thus, much thought went into the selection of a gang-leader.

Music played another important role for the slaves working in the field. It offered the slave a window in an otherwise dark existence. The harsh reality was that slaves would most likely work in the field until the day they died. So would all their loved ones, and everyone else they knew. Music helped them through this melancholy and gave them strength. Robert Anderson, a white observer, wrote an account of the slaves working in an almost trancelike state to the music they were singing:

[S]teady rhythm of the marching song carried many a slave across the tobacco and hemp fields ahead of a slave driving overseer, when their tired muscles refused to budge for any other stimulent [sic] than that of the rhythm of the song.<sup>19</sup>

Work songs were a form of expression as well as a tool used by the slaves in the fields. The songs boasted about their skill at work. Other songs recounted old loves. Often work songs were made up right on the spot. Thomas Wentworth Higginson describes the time he asked a slave how he created the song they were working to:

‘Once we boys,’ he said, ‘went for tote some rice and de niggerdriver he keep a-callin’ on us; and I say, ‘O de ole nigger-driver.’ Den anudder said, ‘Fust ting my manimy tole me was notin, so bad as nigger-driver.’ Den I made a sing, just puttin’ a word, and den anudder word.’

Then he began singing, and the men, after listening a moment, joined in the chorus, as if it were an old acquaintance, though they

evidently had never heard it before. I saw how easily a new 'sing' took root among them.

O de ole nigger-driver  
 O gwine away!  
 First ting my mammy tell me  
 O gwine away!  
 Tell me 'bout be nigger-driver  
 O gwine away!  
 Nigger-driver second devil  
 O gwine away!  
 Best ting for do he drive  
 O gwine away!  
 Knock he down and spoil he labor  
 O gwine away!<sup>20</sup>

Other accounts tell of slaves creating songs to praise or commemorate the act of another slave. After watching a fellow slave being beaten and having his rations cut, a group of slaves created this song:

No more driver call me  
 No more driver call  
 No more driver call me  
 Many thousand die!

No more peck of corn for me  
 No more peck of corn  
 No more peck of corn for me  
 Many thousand die!<sup>21</sup>

Popular songs like this one often spread across the South. Travelers reported hearing the same song a hundred times as they went from state to state. In other cases a tune from another song was borrowed and a different set of lyrics was incorporated. Since the songs were unwritten, they were always changing.<sup>22</sup>

Because singing played such an integral part in the gang-labor system,

slaves often were made to sing. Music also had other benefits to plantation owners. Plantations usually encompassed large tracts of land, and slaves were not always within their master's view. Making the slaves sing, however, was a way of monitoring where the slaves were located. Music also told the master that the slaves were working and sometimes the task that they were performing. As well as a monitoring system, music helped enforce the belief that the slaves were happy with their lot in life. This was particularly the case when it came to projecting to the outside world that the slaves were content. A lot of times it worked. There are many accounts of visitors coming to the South and reporting back home that the slaves were content singing and working the entire day. As Frederick Douglass explains, however, this could not have been farther from the truth:

Slaves are generally expected to sing as well as to work. A silent slave is not liked by masters or overseers...This may account for the almost constant singing heard in the southern states...I have often been utterly astonished, since I came north, to find persons who could speak of the singing among slaves as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slaves represent the sorrows of his life; and he is relieved by them only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least such is my experience.<sup>23</sup>

The songs that the slaves were allowed to sing, however, were strictly monitored whenever possible. The plantation owners prohibited the slaves from singing any critical or melancholy songs under their supervision. Instead, they favored cheerful music with senseless words.<sup>24</sup> Because of the restrictions placed on the work songs, most of the critical songs we have today came to us from runaway slaves. These critical songs recount tales of great sadness. There are songs of oppression and defiance. Other songs speak of the sale of loved ones and runaways.<sup>25</sup> There are numerous songs about tricking the master. One of the most prominent themes in these critical songs was the feeling of anger of having to do all the work and watch the masters increase their wealth. One of the most popular of these songs was published in 1853 by a fugitive slave:

The big bee flies high,  
The little bee makes the honey.  
The black folks make the cotton  
And the white folk gets the money.<sup>26</sup>

In his autobiography, Douglass also recalls a song that was sung behind the master's back:

We raise de wheat,  
Dey gib us de corn.  
We Bake de bread,  
Dey gib us de crust.  
We sif de meat,  
Dey gib us de huss.  
We peel de meat,  
Dey gib us de skin.  
And dat's de way  
Dey take us in.  
We skin de pot,  
Dey gib us de liquor  
And say dat's good enough for nigger.  
Walk over, walk over,  
Your butter and fat.  
Poor nigger, you can't git over dat,  
Walk over.<sup>27</sup>

Not only were work songs used to criticize the master, but they often had a clandestine meaning. Since they were a tool for communicating to large numbers of slaves, work songs were a perfect means of relaying messages. Phrases were placed into songs to relay the spot of a secret meeting. Songs were used to pass information along quickly, perhaps about the sale of a loved one.<sup>28</sup> Other songs coordinated escapes. Douglass describes how he used music to plan an escape with five other slaves. By using a secret code, Douglass relayed to the others when it was approaching the time to escape, and boosted their morale in the meantime:

O Canaan, sweet Canaan,  
I am bound for the land of Canaan,  
I thought I heard them say  
There were lions in the way;  
I don't expect to stay  
Much longer here.  
Run to Jesus, shun the danger.  
I don't expect to stay  
Much longer here,<sup>29</sup>

As Douglass explains, when he sang about Canaan what he really meant was the North. The line, "I don't expect to stay much longer here" was in fact a prayer that they might be safe from all dangers while traveling north.<sup>30</sup>

Work and music were closely connected for the slave. Because of the need to coordinate the movement and pace of large numbers of slaves, music was a necessity for the gang-labor system to function properly. This is reflected in the importance of gang-leaders. Their abilities to sing directly affected the morale of the slaves and the productivity of the plantation. This correlation between work and music also can be seen in the structure of the work songs. They rarely stray from the AB and AAB pattern because the work the slave did remained more or less constant. Yet in spite of the restrictions work placed on the music, slaves still made it their own. The lyrics they sang are filled with their hopes and dreams. The work songs criticized slavery and their masters. They used the music to set up secret meetings, pass messages and plan escapes. The music may not have been free from work, but the slaves nevertheless gave it life. After the collapse of slavery the system of work changed, and African American music was given room to grow.



## End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> John Wesley Work, *Folk Song of the American Negro* (New York: Negro University, 1969), 8.
- <sup>2</sup> Work, 9.
- <sup>3</sup> Gerald David Jaynes, *Branches Without Roots; Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South, 1862-1882* (New York: Morrow Quin, 1963), 165.
- <sup>4</sup> James Mellon, ed. *Bullwhip Days; The Slaves Remember* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 138.
- <sup>5</sup> William Barlow, "Looking up at Down;" *The Emergence of Blues Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1989), 10.
- <sup>6</sup> Maud Cuney-Hare, *Negro Musicians and their Music* (New York: Da Capo, 1974), 79.
- <sup>7</sup> Work, 71.
- <sup>8</sup> Work, 8.
- <sup>9</sup> Ira Berlin, Favreau Marc, Miller Steven F, ed. *Remembering Slavery; African Americans Talk about their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Freedom* (New York: New York, 1994), 176-177.
- <sup>10</sup> Odam and Johnson, 247.
- <sup>11</sup> Paul Oliver, *The Story of the Blues* (Boston: Northeastern University, 1997), 9-10.
- <sup>12</sup> Work, 8.
- <sup>13</sup> Oliver, 17.
- <sup>14</sup> Berlin, 101-102.
- <sup>15</sup> Oliver, 9-10.
- <sup>16</sup> Berlin, 66.
- <sup>17</sup> John Work, *American Negro Songs; 230 Folk Songs and Spirituals, Religious and Secular* (New York: Dover, 1998), 37-38.
- <sup>18</sup> Odam and Johnson, 246-247.
- <sup>19</sup> Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 56.
- <sup>20</sup> Barlow, 14-15.
- <sup>21</sup> Barlow, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Barlow, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Fredrick Douglass, *Life and Times of Fredrick Douglass; His Early Life as a Slave, his Escape from Bondage, and his Complete History* (New York: Bonanza, 1892), 54-55.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel B Charter, *The Country Blues* (New York: Da Capo, 1975), 21.

<sup>25</sup> Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested; The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta* (New York: Verso, 1998), 50.

<sup>26</sup> Barlow, 12.

<sup>27</sup> Douglass, 146-147.

<sup>28</sup> Cuney-Hare, 67.

<sup>29</sup> Douglass, 159.

<sup>30</sup> Douglass, 160.

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# God's Judges: Divine Justice in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*

Samuel Herman



Thus must we toil in other men's extremes,  
That know not how to remedy our own;  
And do them justice, when unjustly we,  
For all our wrongs, can compass no redress.  
But shall I never live to see the day  
That I may come, by justice of the heavens,  
To know the cause that may my cares allay?"<sup>1</sup>

One of the primary roles performed by a government is the administration of justice. However, the nature of the relationship between the state and justice has changed over time. This is especially true of the moral and practical issue of justice. During the Early Modern period in Europe the moral and practical sides of justice were explored by English political writers such as Thomas Cartwright and Sir Edward Coke. Both writers emphasized God as the source of all law and, therefore, the state's role as the administrator of justice changed. The state was now the administrator of divine justice and was fulfilling a duty to both its subjects and God. Yet the question emerged what were the subjects of a country to do if the state failed in its duty to uphold and administer justice? Thomas Kyd,

in his 1588 play *The Spanish Tragedy*, directly addresses this question as the above quote taken from the play's main character, Hieronimo, demonstrates. The play tells of how the corruption in the Spanish court results in several murders that go unpunished. Kyd uses Hieronimo as an example of someone who takes justice into his own hands when the government fails to uphold its own laws. However, Kyd ends the play with Hieronimo being rewarded in the afterlife for his actions, which is counter to the beliefs of the period that revenge is a sin. Kyd goes against the opinions of his contemporaries and even praises those who take the burden of justice upon their own shoulders when their state fails to administer justice.

Although Coke and Cartwright's works were published in the seventeenth century, their ideas prevailed through the late Elizabethan era. They were particularly influential in promoting the belief that all law descended from God, which was also a central theme to Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634), English jurist and author of the *Institutes of the Laws of England*, was the greatest and most outspoken critic of English law during the Elizabethan era. Coke's criticisms of the judicial system in England are especially apparent in his article entitled *Judges Judged out of their own Mouths* (1650). In this article, Coke performs a critical analysis of the *Magna Carta* and compares its laws with the Elizabethan legal system.<sup>2</sup> In this article, the failure to administer justice properly in early modern England becomes apparent.

Coke begins his article by outlining what purpose the *Magna Carta* served for its period in history. He states that there were four major goals in the *Magna Carta*. The first was for the honor of God, the second was the health of the king's soul, the third was for the exaltation of the church and the fourth was the amendment of the kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Coke emphasizes the last reason. He describes the ultimate goal of the document: to remove the corruption that existed in the kingdom for a stronger Common Law for the entire realm. Coke demonstrates this conviction when he wrote, "This Charter was made... to amend great mischiefs [sic], and inconveniences, which oppressed the whole Realm before the making of both Charters. This [Charter] were declarative Acts of the old Common Law of the Land."<sup>4</sup> His acknowledgment of Common Law demonstrates one of his greatest criticisms of the English legal system: power and prestige that the King had over the judicial process. In fact, Coke strongly argues that the King's relationship with the legal system should be

a subservient role. Instead of dictating and administering justice, the King should be sworn to observe and obey the law.<sup>5</sup> Coke particularly disliked the medieval feudal system and the apparent favoritism that existed at the court. Yet, the *Magna Carta*, in theory, solved this type of corruption in the legal system by placing more legal power in Parliament rather than in the King. However, Coke felt that there still existed too much royal influence in the legal system. Coke supports his arguments with the example of how freeholders lost their lands to both the crown and the nobles. Furthermore, there is an apparent lack of fair court in this procedure or legal protection for the people being exploited by the elite.<sup>6</sup> Thus, favoritism and intrigue at the court persisted in English society during the Elizabethan era.

Coke is deeply concerned by the apparent favoritism and royal influence in the legislative process of the realm because he believes that it will lead to civil unrest. Coke points to the *Magna Carta* as an example of the people's will and desire to be governed and judged fairly by their government.<sup>7</sup> Coke believes this would only be possible if the ideals of the *Magna Carta* were upheld and Parliament had complete control over justice within England. Yet, the influence of the crown has corrupted both the nobles and the judges—which resulted in the people being robbed of their liberties. Coke believes that if the English crown did not relinquish its control over justice then the people would eventually begin demanding their rights back. Coke went further by declaring that all the past English civil wars were undertaken to reform injustice, evil government, and corrupt lawyers.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Coke saw that there existed numerous problems with the Elizabethan administration of justice and his strong belief that, unless a change occurred, social unrest would increase. With Cromwell and the English Civil War between the Parliament and the Crown on the horizon, Coke's fear was not without justification.

Although Coke is often considered a secular writer, he acknowledges the importance of religion in justice. When he was analyzing the political consequences of excommunication Coke stated that, "Confirmations were made [on excommunication], and grounded upon the Common-Laws of England, which, as all lawyers profess, were grounded upon the Law of God."<sup>9</sup> This is a somewhat ambiguous statement but what Coke meant was that there existed inherent religious aspects within all law. Although Coke did not spend a great deal of time discussing this connection between law and religion, he did explicitly state that all laws were based upon the law of God

which was the word of the God of truth.<sup>10</sup> It fell to other political writers besides Coke to further discuss this connection between justice and God.

Cartwright (1535-1603), a divinity professor at the University of Cambridge, published an article entitled *Helpes for Discovery of the Truth in Point of Toleration* (1648) which illustrated the connection between law and God. Cartwright explicitly states that the gospel was an addition of law. Furthermore, Cartwright also argues that, "All the Laws, Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial, being the Laws of God."<sup>11</sup> This viewpoint does not differ significantly from what Coke wrote in his article. However, Cartwright goes further than Coke by professing that the only possible changes in law must be done through God's will.<sup>12</sup> This means that all laws should uphold Christian ideals. Thus, Cartwright makes it clear that only God, and neither the Parliament nor the King, is the true source and strength of law and justice in England.

Cartwright and an anonymous work entitled *The Lawes and Statutes of God* (1646) make the final connection between God and justice by illustrating the role of the state as an instrument of divine justice. The role of the state is similar in both works. Cartwright states that it is the duty of the state to punish the guilty in the name of God because all criminals, by virtue of breaking the law, have also sinned against God.<sup>13</sup> The anonymous author of *The Lawes and Statutes of God* reinforces the idea that criminals, especially murderers, are committing blasphemies against God. *The Lawes and Statutes of God* emphasizes murderers because God created man in his own image and when someone slays a man they are slaying the image of God.<sup>14</sup> While both authors stress the notion that God is the source of all law, they also emphasize the need of the state to fulfill God's justice. *The Lawes and Statutes of God* declares that, "Man shall do the work...so that it is not left unto the will of man in authority and power, to abstain from executing justice upon willful murderers; but they are bound by God's command to do it, and they must do it as they will answer for it unto God in this world."<sup>15</sup> It is in this way that the state became an instrument of divine justice. No longer is the state merely enforcing justice for simple stability in society or even because of a certain feeling of duty toward the people. Now the state administers justice because it is fulfilling its duty to God. This differs drastically from the middle ages when the church, with cooperation from the state, was solely responsible for administering justice in the name of God. Yet even then the



medieval church was primarily concerned with heretics and heathens. The next question is why did the state suddenly become the administrator of divine justice during the Elizabethan era? Cartwright provides the answer when he admits to basing many of his arguments on the writings of John Calvin and other reformers.<sup>16</sup> It seems clear that the Protestant Reformation, which had spread throughout Europe only forty years before Elizabeth came to power, is a critical component of the emerging idea that the state is the administrator of divine justice.

It is in this intellectual climate that Thomas Kyd wrote *The Spanish Tragedy*. Coke had made it clear that there still existed alarming flaws within the English judicial system. Cartwright and the author of *The Lawes and Statutes of God* went further and placed greater burden and expectation upon the state to administer justice to its subjects. Kyd himself became a victim of the English judicial system for his possible religious beliefs.<sup>17</sup> *The Spanish Tragedy* does an excellent job of representing the Elizabethan perception of justice and Kyd, like Coke, makes a strong statement about the corruptness of regimes. When the state fails in its role to uphold justice, a form of divine justice takes its place. There are three major scenes in the play that demonstrate this.

The first example of justice being administered in *The Spanish Tragedy* is when the Portuguese Viceroy almost had Alexandro wrongfully executed. In this scene we see all the judicial powers within the hands of one person, the Viceroy. Furthermore, he is being easily manipulated by the corrupt Villuppo, who is purposely trying to engineer the death of Alexandro. The Viceroy, convinced by Villuppo's arguments that Alexandro is responsible for the death of Balthazar, announces,

"No more, Villuppo, thou hast said enough,  
And with thy words thou slay'st [sic] our wounded thoughts.  
Nor shall I longer dally with the world,  
Procrastinating Alexandro's death:  
Go some of you and fetch the traitor forth,  
That as he is condemned he may die."<sup>18</sup>

Thus, the government, in this case the Viceroy, is not necessarily corrupt but certainly inept. Yet, this scene also represents Coke's criticism that there is too

much royal power in the early modern political system. Kyd allows a form of old—fashioned divine justice to make an appearance in this scene. When Alexandro is about to be executed, a critical messenger arrives in time to inform the Viceroy of Viluppo's treachery by announcing, "Stay, hold a while/ And here, with pardon of his majesty,/ Lay hands upon Villuppo."<sup>19</sup> Thus, God had apparently stepped in to change the course of events by ensuring the messenger had arrived in time. This scene demonstrates the traditional version of divine justice where the omnipresent God is able to intervene to save the righteous. Although it might be counter to what other people might have believed during Kyd's period, it certainly demonstrates Kyd's belief that there was a divine presence in the play.

The second example of justice being administered is when the hangman executes Pedringano for the murder of Serberine. Pedringano attempts to convince the hangman not to carry out the sentence by having him look into the box that a boy was carrying.<sup>20</sup> The box contained a pardon for Pedringano that was signed by Lorenzo. If the hangman had looked inside the box then a murderer would have been freed. However, the hangman did not and stated simply that, "Faith, I cannot tell, nor I care greatly. Methinks you/ should rather hearken to your soul's health."<sup>21</sup> In this case the hangman was an example of the state successfully performing its duty to administer justice. One can even argue that a hint of divine justice was involved because the hangman so stubbornly refused to investigate the box. However, the hangman also represents the ideal administrator of justice Cartwright envisioned. The hangman performed his duty to God by executing the murderer regardless of potential distractions.

Yet Hieronimo is the true representative of divine justice within *The Spanish Tragedy* and he is also perfectly suited to assume this role as the chief magistrate of Spain. Therefore, as an administrator of justice, he already has an acute sense of right and wrong.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Hieronimo has complete confidence and faith in the judicial system. Thus, Coke would argue that Hieronimo represents a typical subject of early modern England who wants to be ruled justly by his government. Furthermore, Hieronimo believes that he can gain compensation for the murder of Horatio through due process.<sup>23</sup> Hieronimo attempts to go to the king and convince him to punish the guilty party. Yet his attempts fail as the cunning Lorenzo manages to persuade the King that Hieronimo is merely rambling nonsense and it means nothing by

saying, "My gracious lord, he is with extreme pride, / Conceived of young Horatio his son, / And covetous of having himself / The ransom of the young prince Balthazar, / Distract, and in a manner lunatic."<sup>24</sup> Much to Hieronimo's surprise, the King actually believes Lorenzo and Hieronimo's efforts to obtain justice fails. At first Hieronimo is not sure what to do since the state had failed him in its duty to uphold law and strive to punish the guilty. This scene further reinforces the arguments by Coke that if too much power is in the hands of an individual it is impossible to obtain true justice and order in the society.

The failure to obtain justice through the state leaves Hieronimo in a daze, and he is not brought out of it until the scene where he meets the old man, Senex. This is an interesting scene because it occurs after Hieronimo's pleas for justice have failed and he is actually forced to perform his administrative duties on several citizens and the Senex. The grievances of the citizens are completely benign and meaningless in Hieronimo's eye, but the old man's grievance has more personal meaning to Hieronimo. The old man, like Hieronimo, is also seeking justice for his murdered son. Hieronimo sees his own grief in the old man and realizes how helpless the situation is as he can do nothing to help either the old man or himself avenge the deaths of their sons.<sup>25</sup> This is when Hieronimo is convinced that the state had failed and that God was not going to intervene. Therefore, Hieronimo is left as the only instrument of divine justice. This scene demonstrates what Coke feared a corrupt judicial system would result in: that the people would begin to act independently of the state when trying to maintain stability within their own lives.

The final act of justice in *The Spanish Tragedy* is the play within the play wherein Hieronimo succeeds in punishing the guilty party for the death of his son. For all intents and purposes, the play is orchestrated to function as a substitute for the state's role as chief judge. Therefore, the play is public, elaborate and gruesome. Furthermore, Hieronimo passes judgment after it is over in the presence of the King and, in essence, publicly condemns the murderers to the fate that had already fallen upon them. He justifies killing his son's murderers by showing the King his own dead son and saying,

"See here my show, look on this spectacle.  
Here lay my hope, and here my hope hath end;

Here lay my heart, and here my heart was slain;  
Here lay my treasure, here my treasure was lost;  
Here lay my bliss, and here my bliss bereft [sic];  
They murdered me that made these fatal marks."<sup>26</sup>

Thus, Hieronimo had succeeded in performing a kind of divine justice upon the victims and he is rewarded for it at the end of the play when, in death, he is brought into heaven for his actions. Kyd is making a bold statement about Hieronimo and other heroes who defy a corrupt government to ensure that justice is administered in society. Kyd argues that these men and women are justified in their actions and will be rewarded for the state failing in its duties. Therefore, Hieronimo is a tragic hero but not a stubborn, obsessive villain bent solely on revenge. No, Hieronimo was ensuring that justice was delivered to the real villains in the play.

*The Spanish Tragedy* goes against many of the trends of its time. Only the state could administer justice and all who took over that role were looked down upon and his or her actions were construed as mindless revenge. Yet, Kyd demonstrates that there was more to Hieronimo's actions than just revenge and that the individual should not be blamed for personally punishing the villains. Instead, it was the state's fault for not fulfilling its obligation. Thus, Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* counters the political views of his contemporaries, such as Cartwright and Coke. Kyd supports Hieronimo's actions and believes that even if a society has a corrupt judicial system it is still possible, and necessary, to punish the guilty. Furthermore, although God is not directly present in *The Spanish Tragedy*, aspects of traditional divine justice are present in portions of the play. Thus, Kyd portrays a positive picture of the early modern political system. While Coke and Cartwright are skeptical of the Elizabethan political system, Kyd provides a glimmer of hope for justice in individuals and Divine Retribution they receive for their actions. This is why Hieronimo goes to heaven at the end of the play despite his previous actions.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, edited by J.R. Mulryne (London: A & C Black, 2000), 64.

<sup>2</sup> The Magna Carta was signed by King John in 1215.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Edward Coke, *Judges Judged out of their own Mouths* (London: W. Bently, 1650), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 37-39.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 93-94.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Cartwright, *Helpes for Discovery of the Truth in Point of Toleration* (London: Westminster Hall, 1648), 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>14</sup> Anon, *Lawes and Statutes of God* (London: Mathew Simmons, 1646), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Cartwright, *Helpes for Discovery of the Truth*, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Kyd was imprisoned by the Privy Council on 11 May 1593 for possessing blasphemous papers that Kyd claimed belonged to Marlowe. Kyd died a year later in prison from natural causes. Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, xii.

<sup>18</sup> Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, 46-47.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Henry Levin, "'Vindicta Mihi!': Meaning, Morality, and Motivation in the Spanish Tragedy." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring 1964), 308.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>24</sup> Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, 83-84.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 116-118.

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Anon. The lavves and statutes of God, concerning the punishment to be inflicted upon wilfull murderers. With some briefe annotations by way of explanation upon the same. Shewing (unto all those that are ignorant of it) that the (under God) most high and supream courts of magistracie and iudicature, the Parliaments of England, and Scotland, may lawfully, and are bound in point of iustice, to make warre against, and shed the bloud of all those wilfull murderers, that are risen up in arms unjustly against them and Gods people in both these kingdoms, and in Ireland. Also, some portions of scripture, for terror to those that despise the word of God, and follow the wisdome and policy of the flesh: and for the comfort and assurance of those that doe hearken unto the counsel of the Lord, and walk in his wayes. Published according to order. London: Printed by Matthew Simmons for Benjamin Allen, neere the Exchange. 1646 Bib Name / Number: Wing (2nd ed.) / L698; Thomason / E.325[24] No. pages: [2], 10 p. Copy from: British Library.

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*Out to Dry*, Anna Lodwick, Gelatin Silver Print



*January 22, 2005, Elizabeth Rideout, Gelatin Silver Print*



*Mike's Drawer, Bethany Heilman Yousefi, Gelatin Silver Print*



*Silence*, Nicole Tripp, Gelatin Silver Print



CMSP in November, Astra Haldeman, Zinc Plate Dry Point Etching





# For Robert Rauschenberg

*M. Jeanette Kelleher*



Using a knife, I smear my bedsheets  
with oil paint, sepia thick as frosting,  
Alizaron crimson splashes, Cerulean bruises  
that stain my skin when I wake.

I pluck feathers from a robin  
flattened on the asphalt and poke  
sharp stems into my mattress and pillow.  
They nest in my hair and tickle my cheeks.

I dream of street sign piles, falling  
desert cities, silkscreen smiles.



# Venice, July

*M. Jeanette Kelleher*



San Marco pulses in glimmers of heat,  
stirs with the milling of pigeons scrapping  
for crumbs. I cannot see beyond the sweat  
stinging in my eyes squinted against the haze  
of Mediterranean afternoon and the sharp glitter  
of cameras beating against the peaked domes.

Stalls line the low canal where green stains mark  
the height of the water before the drought.  
I walk among the crowds of tourists and buskers  
who sing the Beatles and chant low prayers. I  
still feel thick with wine from lunch,  
watching oars leave quiet whirlpools.

I fish my pocket for a thick coin  
and push onto the swaying ferry.



# The Relationship of Education and Rural-to-Urban Migration to Quito's "Urban Children at Risk"

Jessica Cain



Urban children at risk" are children who face poverty and other adversities. This phrase is a more ethical alternative to the more commonly used "street children." Although several researchers argue that poverty is the cause of "urban children at risk," researchers must have a more holistic outlook. Other factors often work in conjunction with poverty and can be identified by contemplating what causes poverty within a nation. What factors are tied to poverty? If these questions are not addressed, then the research is inherently biased by excluding essential information.

To assess el Programa del Muchacho Trabajador, or PMT, and its interventions with Quito's "urban children at risk" for my anthropology senior obligation, I researched the native causes of this phenomenon. I found that in addition to poverty, several pertinent factors contribute to the phenomenon of "urban children at risk." Two examples are the poor quality of the Ecuadorian educational system and rural-to-urban migration.

According to Article thirty-seven of the Childhood and Adolescence Code within the Ecuadorian Constitution, every girl, boy and adolescent has the right to a proper education. This entitlement includes free obligatory public education until the tenth year, or the *bachillerato*,<sup>1</sup> or its equivalent.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Ecuador's educational system does not reflect

these constitutional requirements. It is wrought with several difficulties, from individual classrooms to the Ministry of Education and Culture. The system mirrors poor quality and unsatisfactory budgeting.<sup>3</sup> These problems have a large impact upon students and directly affect their future.

The average total length of study within Ecuador is 6.7 years.<sup>4</sup> Ecuador's illiteracy rate is 9%, and illiteracy in those who are older than fifteen is 21.3%.<sup>5</sup> One out of every ten students repeats the first grade,<sup>6</sup> and at the primary level, students require an average of 7.7 years to complete this level.<sup>7</sup> There is a repetition rate of 12% within the cities and 53% within *el campo*.<sup>8</sup>

Scholarly desertion also plagues the nation. One out of every three children does not complete primary school.<sup>9</sup> On the whole, desertion rates are 33.8% in rural areas and 16.8% in urban areas. Sixty-three percent of adolescents between the ages of twelve to fourteen matriculate; however, only 29% of fifteen-to-nineteen-year-olds complete their secondary studies.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, there is a lack of infrastructure and resources available to students and teachers.<sup>11</sup> Twenty percent of schools do not have access to electricity and potable water. Four out of ten schools do not have telephones or faxes.<sup>12</sup> The majority of educational programs geared towards fourth to sixth graders are twenty-five years old and have not been revised.<sup>13</sup> There is pedagogic deficiency in teachers and lack of adequate and utilized didactic material.

These difficulties also are reflected in test scores. In comparison to its Latin American neighbors, Ecuador's students score the lowest on math and Spanish exams.<sup>14</sup> Fourteen percent of *colegios*<sup>15</sup> within Quito achieved a score 50% or higher in an exam facilitated by Quito's Catholic University.<sup>16</sup> In 1996, ninth graders scored 12.89 points out of 20 and 7.29 out of 20 upon Spanish and Mathematics exams directed by the National System for Measurement of Academic Achievement.<sup>17</sup>

One root of the poor educational quality is economic crisis.<sup>18</sup> The state of the economy has direct effects upon public and governmental spending. In 2001, public spending comprised 2.8% of the PIB that was directed towards education. The PIB is the equivalent of our Gross Domestic Product. According to the Ecuadorian Constitution, 30% of the State budget should be designated to education, but in 1999, only 9.2% was spent and in 2003, 11.2%.<sup>19</sup> In 1997, \$129 was invested in each student; this is significantly lower than in other Latin American nations.<sup>20</sup> Another problem tied to this dilemma is

poor budgeting. Ninety-five percent of the money for education is spent on salaries; thus, little is left to pay for infrastructure and materials.<sup>21</sup> There is poor management of monetary investment for the Ecuadorian educational system. Teaching is also affected by these situations and other factors.

Although the majority of the educational budget is spent on salaries, on the whole, teachers have not been well paid.<sup>22</sup> The average teaching salary was \$165 in 2000. In 2002, it increased to \$350. In 2003, the average monthly income in Quito was \$215; however, the cost of the basic family-shopping basket was \$392. Some teachers often hold more than one job because of this.<sup>23</sup> Wages that do not cover expenses also tend to lower motivation with regards to teaching.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, Ecuadorians are able to become teachers with less expertise because there is a low level of teaching qualification.<sup>25</sup> These factors most likely affect teaching quality.

Teaching performance is directly linked to high repetition and desertion rates. In addition to the obstacles that teachers face, older teaching methods of repetition and memorization are frequently used in the classroom. These methods might not relate to distinct capabilities of some of the students. Teaching methods are also uniform; they do not emphasize adequate materials and resources.<sup>26</sup>

Maltreatment is also a common practice within Ecuadorian schools, including both physical and verbal punishment. Verbal abuse is more frequent. The terms “lazy” and “pig” denigrate students. Physical reprimands are used more with younger children, while adolescents tend to receive more verbal castigation. Ten percent of Ecuadorian students have reported being struck by a teacher.<sup>27</sup> Teachers who mistreat students with these methods help induce scholarly desertion. If parents perceive this treatment or if the quality of teaching is seen as deficient, the children are often withdrawn from school.<sup>28</sup>

Problems exist on the governmental level, compounding this situation. The Ministry of Education and Culture has been characterized as contradictory, inefficient and costly.<sup>29</sup> It does not provide quality long-term planning. The Ministry is also distanced from local conditions and complicates local management initiatives. It lacks efficacy, being characterized by excess personnel and corruption.<sup>30</sup>

I also would like to add further information from my personal experiences in Quito and as a past volunteer for PMT. PMT is a non-governmental

organization for which I conducted street outreach during the fall semester of 2004. Some of my experiences involved visiting schools. Seventy percent of students who matriculate attend public education and thirty percent attend private or specialized education.<sup>31</sup> Despite these statistics, there are several private schools within Quito. Needless to say, these schools are not lacking in funds because they charge high tuition. To be blunt, they offer far better educational opportunities than public schools.

That public schools receive less funding is evident in the surroundings and materials. Public education generally entails poorer quality. Children with whom PMT works still have to pay approximately \$21 to matriculate. They also have to pay for books and uniforms, although some of these books are hard to locate. There exists little autonomy in the schools and some in the *colegios*.<sup>32</sup> From my observations, there was a large discrepancy in the quality of educational material from school to school.

The poor quality of the Ecuadorian educational system has a direct negative effect upon children. Since families have to pay for matriculation, books and other costs, some are not able to afford to send their children to school. The state of the educational system also contributes to children abandoning their studies. I believe that these situations aid in the creation of “urban children at risk.” Although lack of access to a quality education is often considered an indicator of poverty, it also is a determinant of poverty.<sup>33</sup>

It has been indicated that within Ecuador, the poor tend to be less educated.<sup>34</sup> Those who do not complete primary studies tend to run poor households. Illiterate individuals head about 20% of poor homes.<sup>35</sup> Within the population that is economically active, it was found that 20% of the poorest homes are characterized by an average of five years of study, while twelve years of scholarship marked 20% of the richest residences.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, it has been shown that more educated workers tend to earn better incomes.<sup>37</sup> These individuals are considered more productive than their less educated counterparts.<sup>38</sup>

Education is one of the better ways to break inequalities, leave poverty and develop social mobility. If children do not attend school and are lacking a quality education the chances of poverty are raised.<sup>39</sup> There is also sufficient evidence indicating a cycle of poverty; that children of parents with lower amounts of education will hold comparable levels.<sup>40</sup> As a result of the state of Ecuador's educational system, many children and adolescents do not learn



sufficient skills to qualify for higher income jobs. Thus, the outcome is often the inability to overcome poverty.

Similar to education, migration is an important phenomenon to understand in relation to “urban children at risk” within Quito. In Ecuador, the urban population grew from about 25% in 1950 to 55% by 1990.<sup>41</sup> More than 50% of Quito’s population is composed of immigrants from the provinces of Central and Northern Sierra. Other immigrants have come from *la Costa* and *la Amazonia*.<sup>42</sup> Throughout the past two decades there has been a steady flow of indigenous and Afro-rural migrants to Ecuador’s cities.<sup>43</sup> These populations are generally young; half are around twenty years of age.<sup>44</sup> In 1982, Quito received 400,607 immigrants—67.9% from *la Sierra* and 40% from *la Costa*.<sup>45</sup> In 1986, this number grew to 1,076,903.<sup>46</sup> Quito and Guayaquil alone are the destination of 29% of all internal immigrants 13% and 16% respectively.<sup>47</sup> Clearly, permanent rural-urban migration is an important phenomenon in Ecuador.<sup>48</sup>

These migrant populations are generally in search of better economic opportunities and social mobility. Quito has seen high concentrations of immigrants because of limited access to land, low-income levels and disadvantageous terms of trade with regard to urban markets within rural areas.<sup>49</sup> Tied to this issue, the majority of rural inhabitants are only able to achieve subsistence living.<sup>50</sup> Based upon economic reasons, if a spouse emigrates, the wife and their children often accompany him. Family reasons tend to be the second largest reason to migrate to the cities. Migration may hold benefits for the children such as access to higher levels of education.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, many encounter situations different from what they expected within the city.

Immigrants generally live within the marginal areas of the cities, where economic and social issues are more urgent.<sup>52</sup> My experiences in Quito indicate that these areas are the far northern and southern sections of the city. The wealthiest populations live within the middle of the city or outside of it. I found southern Quito to be an incredibly sprawling area, extending farther than the “touristy” colonial section. I believe good boundary markers are *la Virgen de Quito*<sup>53</sup> and *los túneles*,<sup>54</sup> which lead directly to this area.

The far south of Quito was a different world from where I lived. Its appearance was strikingly different and poverty and crime were more prevalent. For safety reasons, I could not have entered this area without local

contacts. These are not the only difficult situations that immigrants encounter when they arrive in the cities.

Indigenous and Afro-rural migrant populations are often confronted by ethnic and social discrimination upon their arrival within the city. This makes it harder for them to locate and keep jobs and accommodations. For this reason, social and family networks are important upon arrival.<sup>55</sup> With my experiences in Ecuador, I found prejudice and racism against indigenous and Afro-rural people to be prevalent. I found that the wealthier populations within Quito do not value indigenous culture. Ecuadorians who live within the Sierra call inhabitants of *la Costa monos* or “monkeys.”

Immigrants have been characterized by difficulties with acculturation and low economic gains. Within Quito, only 30-40% of immigrants find better job opportunities.<sup>56</sup> Immigrants with low levels of education find limited access to skilled employment. Thus, they are often found in unskilled positions such as domestic help, construction, bricklaying and ambulatory selling.<sup>57</sup> Many migrants become employed within the informal sector.<sup>58</sup> Indigenous employment especially tends to be characterized by informality and temporality. This holds particularly true for the commerce market within Quito, in which street or small market selling is referred to as “*trabajo de indios*” or “Indian work.”<sup>59</sup>

Immigrants often accept jobs with inferior salaries and often under the minimum wage.<sup>60</sup> This is because to survive they need to insert their families within the urban markets. These circumstances do not deter individuals from migrating to the city.<sup>61</sup> If salaried conditions are inferior to the family's necessities, it obliges other members of the family to work.<sup>62</sup> This includes women and children. I found the majority of people and children working upon the streets to be of indigenous origins. It is obvious to the passersby because they wear their traditional clothing. While volunteering with PMT, I discovered that several families could not afford to send their children to school. Some children were able to attend school part-time, either in the morning or afternoon. However, their labor was still necessary for their family.

Rodrigo Ambrossi argues that the majority of children working upon the streets of Quito are immigrant children.<sup>63</sup> They are forced to work if their parents cannot make sufficient money to support the family.<sup>64</sup> This can be tied to unemployment, the death of a parent and additional stresses

placed upon the family.<sup>65</sup> These situations may exclude children from attending school. The result is that these children are able to find unskilled employment. However, they are not able to qualify for higher paying jobs in the future because of their lower levels of education. Consequently, there is the potential for the cycle of poverty to repeat.

Poverty is a cause and an indicator of "urban children at risk" within Quito. However, the Ecuadorian educational system and rural-to-urban migration are strongly related. They also contribute to and sustain the existence of these children. To state that poverty alone is the cause is a simplification. It is true that some families cannot afford education for their children. But often it is because they cannot afford the materials required for a "free" public education which includes the costs of matriculation, books and uniforms. The poor quality of education also discourages children in the form of scholarly abandonment.

Migrants hope to find better economic situations and opportunities within the cities. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case, because they typically qualify only for unskilled labor. This can be directly linked to their lower educational levels. Low salaries in turn often force migrant children to work for family survival. Thus, these children are often not allowed an educational opportunity. However, even if these children had the ability to attend school, the quality of Ecuador's educational system would be insufficient. It is likely that they would not remain there. And if they were to remain in school, what kind of education would they receive? These are extremely difficult situations for many children and adults within Quito. I believe these circumstances cannot be improved unless direct action is taken to aid these immigrant families and strong effort is made to reform the Ecuadorian educational system.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Higher secondary education qualification

<sup>2</sup> Ministerio de Bienestar Social, Nuestros Niños Programa de desarrollo infantil. *Código de la Niñez y Adolescencia Ecuador*: Ecuador: Republica del Ecuador, 2003, pgs 23-24.

<sup>3</sup> Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004, pg. 331. Ministerio de Educación y Cultura. “Contrato social por la educación: Situación de la Educación básica en el Ecuador indicadores generales.” 28 August 2004. <<http://www.mec.gov.ec/n2/contrato/pl.htm>> (22 September 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura. “Contrato social por la educación: Situación de la Educación básica en el Ecuador indicadores generales.” 28 August 2004. <<http://www.mec.gov.ec/n2/contrato/pl.htm>> (22 September 2004).

<sup>5</sup> World Bank *Análisis Situacional de la Juventud en el Ecuador*. Quito, Ecuador: Génesis Ediciones, 2004, pg. 110.

<sup>6</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura.

<sup>7</sup> Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004, pg. 331.

<sup>8</sup> The rural areas in Ecuador. World Bank *Análisis Situacional de la Juventud en el Ecuador*. Quito, Ecuador: Génesis Ediciones, 2004, pg. 109.

<sup>9</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank

<sup>11</sup> World Bank, 111. Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004, pg. 331.

<sup>12</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura.

<sup>13</sup> Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004, pg 331.

<sup>14</sup> World Bank *Análisis Situacional de la Juventud en el Ecuador*. Quito, Ecuador: Génesis Ediciones, 2004, pg. 111.

<sup>15</sup> High schools are the American equivalent

<sup>16</sup> Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004, pg. 330.

<sup>17</sup> World Bank *Análisis Situacional de la Juventud en el Ecuador*. Quito, Ecuador: Génesis Ediciones, 2004, pg. 110.

<sup>18</sup> Lara, Mónica Burbano. "Educación básica Ecuatoriana: el desafío de la calidad." In *Problemas críticos de la educación Ecuatoriana y alternativas*. Carlos Paladines Escuerdo eds. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2001, pg. 116. Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004, pg. 331.

<sup>19</sup> Fundación José Peralta, 332.

<sup>20</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura.

<sup>21</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura website.

<sup>22</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura website.

<sup>23</sup> World Bank

<sup>24</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura.

<sup>25</sup> World Bank. *Análisis Situacional de la Juventud en el Ecuador*. Quito, Ecuador: Génesis Ediciones, 2004, pg. 113.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>27</sup> Encuesta de medición de indicadores de la niñez y los hogares (EMEDINHO) *Los Niños y niñas, ahora: Una selección de indicadores de su situación a inicios de la Nueva década*. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2001, pg. 47.

<sup>28</sup> Guzmán, León Mauricio. "Educación desigual: mecanismo de transmisión intergeneracional de la pobreza. 2000. <<http://www.frentesocial.gov.org.ec/sisse/sisse.htm>> (29 September 2004), pg. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Lara, Mónica Burbano. "Educación básica Ecuatoriana: el desafío de la calidad." In *Problemas críticos de la educación Ecuatoriana y alternativas*. Carlos Paladines Escuerdo eds. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2001, pg. 116. Hernández, Barreno Gonzalo. "Visiones y propuestas para la transformación educativa." In *Problemas críticos de la educación Ecuatoriana y alternativas*. Carlos Paladines Escuerdo eds. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2001, pg. 241.

<sup>30</sup> Hernández, 241.

<sup>31</sup> Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004. 332.

<sup>32</sup> Saenz, Alvaro, Samia Penaherrera Solah. "Hacia una Educacion de Calidad y Descentralizada: Una propuesta de reforma de la educacion ecuatoriana." In *Vision a Futuro de la educacion*. Unidad Coordinadora de Programas Ministerio de Educacion Y Cultura Republica del Ecuador. Quito, Ecuador: Quigrafica, 1999, pg.13.

<sup>33</sup> Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004, pg. 331. World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004). pg. 52.

<sup>34</sup> World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004). pg. 25.

<sup>35</sup> World Bank, 28.

<sup>36</sup> Guzmán, León Mauricio. "Educación desigual: mecanismo de transmisión intergeneracional de la pobreza. 2000 <<http://www.frentesocial.gov.org.ec/sisse/sisse.htm>> (29 September 2004). pg. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Fundación José Peralta. *Ecuador: Su realidad*, Edición 2003-2004. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación de Investigación y Promoción Social José Peralta, 2004. pg. 332. World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004), pg. 52. Guzmán, León Mauricio. "Educación desigual: mecanismo de transmisión intergeneracional de la pobreza. 2000. <<http://www.frentesocial.gov.org.ec/sisse/sisse.htm>> (29 September 2004), pg. 1.

<sup>38</sup> World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004, pg. 65.

<sup>39</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Cultura.

<sup>40</sup> Guzmán, León Mauricio. "Educación desigual: mecanismo de transmisión intergeneracional de la pobreza. 2000. <<http://www.frentesocial.gov.org.ec/sisse/sisse.htm>> (29 September 2004), pg. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Waters, William F. "The Road of Many Returns: Rural bases of the Informal Urban Economy in Ecuador." *Latin American Perspectives* 24, no.3 Ecuador, Part 1: Politics and Rural Issues, 1997 (50-64), pg. 54.

<sup>42</sup> La Costa: coastal areas which are more humid and tropic La Amazonia:



jungle areas World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004), pg. 58.

<sup>43</sup> World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004), pg. 58.

<sup>44</sup> World Bank, pg. 58.

<sup>45</sup> Ambrossi, Rodrigo. *Los niños en la calle y el uso de drogas*. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación Nuestros Niños and Agencia Internacional de Desarrollo, 1989, pg. 20.

<sup>46</sup> Aguirre, Rodríguez. *Migración a la Ciudad de Quito y Mercado Laboral*. Quito, Ecuador: CONUEP and University Central, 1987, pg. 94.

<sup>47</sup> World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004), pg. 36.

<sup>48</sup> Waters, William F. "The Road of Many Returns: Rural bases of the Informal Urban Economy in Ecuador." *Latin American Perspectives* 24, no.3 Ecuador, Part 1: Politics and Rural Issues, 1997 (50-64), pg. 54.

<sup>49</sup> Waters, William F., 54.

<sup>50</sup> Pachano, Simón. "Campesinado y migración: Algunas notas sobre el caso Ecuatoriano" In *Población, Migración, y Empleo en el Ecuador*. Edited by Simón Pachano. Quito, Ecuador: ILDIS, 1988, pgs. 207-221.

<sup>51</sup> Centro de Estudios de población y paternidad responsable (CEPAR). *Inmigración a Quito y Guayaquil: estudio de casos*. Quito, Ecuador: CEPAR, 1985, pg. 47.

<sup>52</sup> CEPAR, 50.

<sup>53</sup> A statue of the Virgin Mary which overlooks the city

<sup>54</sup> Tunnels

<sup>55</sup> World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004). pg 59.

<sup>56</sup> Centro de Estudios de población y paternidad responsable (CEPAR). *Inmigración a Quito y Guayaquil: estudio de casos*. Quito, Ecuador: CEPAR, 1985, pg. 61.

<sup>57</sup> Ambrossi, Rodrigo. *Los niños en la calle y el uso de drogas*. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación Nuestros Niños and Agencia Internacional de Desarrollo, 1989, pg. 20.

<sup>58</sup> Ambrossi, Rodrigo, 20.

<sup>59</sup> World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004), pg. 59.

<sup>60</sup>Farell, Gilda. "Migración campesina y Mercado de trabajo urbano." In Población, migración, y empleo en el Ecuador. Edited by Simón Pachano. Quito, Ecuador: Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS), 1988, pg. 298.

<sup>61</sup> World Bank "Ecuador Poverty Assessment. Report No. 27061-EC" 2004, <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (25 September 2004), pg. 59.

<sup>62</sup> Farell, Gilda. "Migración campesina y Mercado de trabajo urbano." In Población, migración, y empleo en el Ecuador. Edited by Simón Pachano. Quito, Ecuador: Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS), 1988, pg. 290.

<sup>63</sup> Ambrossi, Rodrigo. Los niños en la calle y el uso de drogas. Quito, Ecuador: Fundación Nuestros Niños and Agencia Internacional de Desarrollo, 1989, pg. 8.

<sup>64</sup> Ambrossi, Rodrigo, pg. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Ambrossi, Rodrig, pgs. 26-27. Aguirre, Rodríguez. *Migración a la Ciudad de Quito y Mercado Laboral*. Quito, Ecuador: CONUEP and University Central, 1987.



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# Two Weeks After Christmas, 2004

Sara Kathleen Wuillermín



We sit together in the living room,  
lights flash *red blue* over our faces.  
windows observe men pulling bodies onto stretchers  
staining the frozen lawn.

I stand picking bitten fingernails,  
the telephone pole lay splintered in the road.  
The car stopped next to our abandoned tree,  
smoke still pouring from the hood.

"It almost looks like Christmas" mother whispers from the couch,  
I lower my eyes, my father rocks silently in his chair.



# Home as an Imaginary Place

Ron Young



*"Home is an imaginary place that I keep chasing."*

—Diana Abu-Jaber

Noted American actor and dramatist John Howard Payne, in the early 1800s, wrote, "Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam / Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." It certainly is a catchy phrase, reminiscent of a Hallmark card. And it does seem to connect to the American understanding of the word "home," which people think of as a physical place; a place where, as Robert Frost said, "when you have to go there, They have to take you in." But it seems questionable whether this physical place does exist. What about people who are forced to leave their homes and become exiles? That directly challenges Mr. Frost's idea of a home. In her second book entitled *Crescent*, author Diana Abu-Jaber focuses on this exact situation. She develops a variety of characters with various traits and backgrounds who have one thing in common: they are exiles. The experiences of these exiled people can be divided into three different stages: mourning for the lost home, making peace with the ghosts of the lost home, and creating a new home. By progressing through these three stages, the exiles are able to understand that home is in the imagination and cannot be limited to one

geographic or physical location, an idea which Abu-Jaber related to a class at Washington College when she said, "I guess home is an imaginary place that I keep chasing."

Central to the story is the character of Hanif, who is a professor of Arabic literature and an Iraqi exile. It seems that his personal experience of exile is strongest of all the characters because he has such a deep-rooted love for the landscape and culture of the country that he has to leave behind, as well as an overwhelming sense of guilt for having to leave. Through him the reader gets the clearest picture of what exile might be like. And it is through him that the reader may experience the three stages that an exile might go through in their progression towards making a new home.

In the first stage of exile a person is still mourning for the lost home. Um-Nadia, the owner of the Arabic café, perceptively describes these "mourners" as feeling "a little shadow under the heart when he lays his head on his mother's lap; it threatens to swallow him whole when he leaves his own country, even though he marries and travels and talks to friends twenty-four hours a day."<sup>1</sup> The shadow that lurks in these men's hearts seems to be analogous to the dread that a child might feel when he is afraid to grow up, when he knows that at some point he is going to leave his mother. Similarly, an exile knows that he can never go back. No matter what comforts he might find, there is still something lurking just under his heart causing him pain. In the second part of the passage Um-Nadia hints at an important distinction between life and routine. Although the exile might marry, travel, and talk to friends, he still must deal with the shadow. What he is doing is actually creating a routine for himself in his new place, but this does not mean that he has created a life. Nor does it mean that he is able to call the place a home. When Hanif first appears in the book he appears to be mired in the routine of L.A. and not yet out of the initial stage of exile, despite the fact that he has been in the United States for almost twenty years. When Sirine first meets Han she notices the "injured quality of his eyes."<sup>2</sup> He seems dark and mysterious but also rather sad. This "injured quality" is also identified in the young men who frequent Um-Nadia's café. She says that "everything about these young men seemed infinitely vulnerable and tender;" they seem "lonely, and young."<sup>3</sup> The young men and Han are still in mourning for their lost home; they are still struggling with the "shadow under the heart."

People in the first stage of exile seem to be unable to comprehend the idea that home is imaginary, and they continue to struggle with understanding



the “little shadow under their heart.” What these people fail to understand is that from the moment they leave their home it will never be the same. The physical place will always change over time. When Han leaves Iraq, he may try to hold onto the memories of what it was like when he left, but “old stories and memories are like mirages” even if they are based on some reflection of reality, they are “illusory and fantastic.”<sup>4</sup> The error that the exile makes is not that he holds onto the old memories, but that he believes them to be the current reality of the place. For example, it is easy for Han to remember Iraq as a beautiful place filled with rich history and culture. But he does not focus on the fact that now it is a place filled with oppression and obstacles. The best way for Han to move into the next stage of exile is for him to understand the complexity of his home. He must learn to carry home inside himself while still understanding that his memories are only memories. And memories, like shadows, only reflect portions of reality.

The second stage of exile involves making peace with the lost home, a task that arguably is easier said than done. The first step to entering this stage is realizing that home is an imaginary place. As Um-Nadia suggests, when the exiles realize that they need to take a little piece of home with them, then they can begin to face the ghosts which may haunt them. Han faces his ghosts through a series of conversations that lead him back to Iraq and to confrontation with his “little shadow.”

Initially, what helps Han enter the second stage of exile is a conversation that occurs between him and Sirine. In the conversation Sirine struggles to understand Han’s complex feelings. She uses a death metaphor to compare exile to an experience with which she is more familiar. In doing so, she gives Han the opportunity to better articulate himself with a similar metaphor—in this case, a dime room. Sirine begins by saying,

Maybe...it’s a little like...the way death is...there’s nothing about being alive that lets you get what death is. I mean—when someone close to you dies, there’s no way to really understand it, is there? You can sort of know it in your head, but all your body knows is that you’re not seeing or touching them—so all that means is they might just be down the block or in another city.<sup>5</sup>

Through her attempt at understanding what he is feeling, Sirine helps Han form his own metaphor. In this case he describes “a dim, gray room, full

of sounds and shadows, but there is nothing real inside of it. You're constantly thinking you see old friends on the street...you forget everything that you thought you knew. You have to."<sup>6</sup> It is not until he has this conversation with Sirine that Han is able to better understand what he feels and to articulate those feelings to his own satisfaction. But in this metaphor, Han shows a mistake in his logic. He indicates that you hate to forget what you have left behind in your home. But obviously he has not been able to do this since it has been twenty years and he still wrestles with his unresolved issues. What he needs to realize is that he must confront and resolve, not just forget.

The next thing that helps Han in his progression is that he finally relates the story of his leaving to Sirine. He explains that after he had an affair with an American woman staying in Baghdad, he was consequently forced to leave his family to go to a western school in Egypt. When he returns, he is unable to stay with his family because the Ba'athist party will not allow him in Baghdad. Obviously, from the tone of what he explains, Han feels an inordinate amount of guilt for having left his family in Iraq. His guilt perhaps explains why he has been unable to make peace with his lost home. It is only when he relates the story to Sirine that he is able to move along the progression. The simple power of the story moves Han into analyzing why he has been unable to comprehend his predicament in exile.

Finally, Han is forced to confront his memories and ghosts head-on when he and Sirine attend the opening of the photography exhibit of one of Han's students who spent some time in Baghdad. When they look at the photos, Han sees a picture of one of his cousins. He becomes angry and storms out of the exhibit only later telling Sirine, "I wasn't ready to see those images. It was such a shock—to see my cousin's face like that. It startled me so that I didn't know how to react...but later...I realized how moving it was to me."<sup>7</sup> After experiencing this, Han knows that he has not made peace with his home. He knows that in order to be able to make a new life for himself in the United States he needs to be able to let go of what was his Iraq. In the end Han decides that he needs to return to Iraq to make peace with it. He acknowledges what Abu-Najmeh used to say; "that you have to go away three times before you can really get away from anything."<sup>8</sup> Han realizes that he has only left Iraq twice so far.

Ultimately, Han does go back to Iraq to confront the unresolved issues that he has left there. Much like moving through other parts of the progression,

this is not an easy thing to do. In addition to the fact that he has to leave his girlfriend who has helped in the process, Han also faces an uncertain amount of danger in returning to Iraq. Nonetheless, Han realizes that he is “driven by the prospect of return.”<sup>9</sup> He has no other choice. Without bringing closure to what he has left in Iraq, he feels that “the world is broken,”<sup>10</sup> and it is only through returning for the last time and confronting his ghosts that he will be able to put the broken pieces back together.

What Han finds in Iraq is not entirely clear. Similarly, his return to the United States is unclear and somewhat mysterious. But there is important evidence to suggest that Han does make it to the United States and that he is able to make a new life with Sirine.

First, there is evidence that Han has a strong desire to make it back to California and to have a relationship with Sirine. Sirine receives a letter from Iraq that has been heavily edited. But what she is able to decipher tells her that Han “often spoke of you...you must know...and he...very, very much.”<sup>11</sup> Although there are many words that could work in the “blanks” of the letter, given the nature of their relationship before he left one may surmise that he loves her “very, very much”. Next, and perhaps even more important is the newspaper article in which Han appears. According to the article, a Canadian journalist had interviewed a man who claims to be “a political prisoner who broke out and then escaped from Iraq...[and] who says he is on his way home.”<sup>12</sup> This escaped prisoner gives his name as Abdelrahman Salahadin, a name that reoccurs in the stories that Sirine’s uncle tells. But the most telling evidence is when Sirine scans the photograph attached to the article and sees Han. Therefore, Sirine knows that Han is on his way home to her.

The article and photo are evidence that Han has reached the end of the progression through exile. He must have made peace with what he had left in Iraq, even if this occurred “off-camera” so to speak. If he had not finished this business, then he certainly would not be on his way back to California; it took too much to get him to return to Iraq in the first place. He is on his way back to California, his new home.

Although there is no way to be absolutely certain if Han makes it all the way back to California, what is significant is that he makes the attempt. His outlook has greatly changed. He now understands that home is not some geographic location like the country of Iraq. Nor is it a physical thing like a house on a specific street. What Han finds is what Abu-Jaber indicated when

she said that home is imaginary. He discovers that for him, home is where Sirine is. Home is where he has made a lasting connection with someone else, a place where he might be able to move out of the routine, make a life for himself, and defeat the “little shadow.”

In an interview with journalist Andrea Shalal-Esa, Abu-Jaber said, “When you’re faced with not being allowed to return to your homeland, perhaps there is a way that you can resituate yourself.” As revealed in *Crescent*, arguably the best way to do this is to follow some sort of natural progression. It isn’t enough to find a new location and call it home. Nor is it enough to develop a routine and mindlessly go through it, because then you let the “little shadow under your heart” win out and claim you. The character of Han in the story is initially stuck in this sort of rut. He has a routine in California working as a professor, but ultimately he is repressing his feelings about being forced to leave Iraq. It is only through the staged progression that he is able to release the “imaginary place” and “resituate” himself.

By giving her characters a chance to mourn for the lost home, make peace with the lost home, and make a new home, Abu-Jaber offers a perceptive and perhaps unique perspective on the issue of exile. She challenges the idea of home as being a concrete location that one can always come back to, and she stresses the idea that it is through connections with other people that you are able to resituate yourself. Hanif is able to connect with Sirine and through that connection returns to Iraq and deals with everything that he feels he left behind. In the end he realizes that he can carry home inside himself. Maybe Mr. Payne was not so far off. Maybe there really is “no place like home.” Or maybe it would be more appropriate to say that home is no *place*, it is people. It is being with the people you care for that matters, an important lesson that one might learn from Diana Abu-Jaber’s book, *Crescent*.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Diana Abu-Jaber, *Crescent* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 22

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 212

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 202

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 182

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 293

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 211

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 353

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 334

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 365

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 392

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# L'Influence de la Révolution Française de 1789 sur les écrivains et l'écriture du dix-neuvième siècle

Kathryn Belmonte



La Révolution Française de 1789 était vraiment révolutionnaire pour la France. Attisé par la disparité entre la classe pauvre et la classe riche, la Révolution cherchait la liberté, l'égalité, et la fraternité. Les écrivains du dix-neuvième siècle émergeaient de la Révolution avec plus de vision et de concerne pour le peuple. En fait, « [l'artiste] doit être «utile,» enseigner, éclairer, améliorer, et (en 1864) faire de la propagande démocratique. »<sup>1</sup> Les écrivains trouvaient un nouveau but après la guerre : ils devaient être la voix du peuple et encourager les gens de penser aux choses importantes. La nouvelle génération des écrivains au dix-neuvième siècle rompait avec la tradition classique. Les œuvres de l'époque, comme *Hernani* par Victor Hugo, montrent que ces changements étaient un catalyseur pour transformer le rôle de la littérature dans la société et pour soutenir les causes sociales.

En 1789, le climat politique en France était turbulent. La population était divisée selon les classes sociales : les membres du clergé, les nobles, et les roturiers sont les trois niveaux. Les roturiers faisaient la plus grande partie de la population, mais ils avaient moins de liberté que les autres groupes. Ils payaient les impôts et ne gagnaient guère les améliorations que les impôts finançaient. En plus, les Lumières installaient dans les têtes des gens les idées sensibilisées aux problèmes sociaux. Les Lumières mettaient

en doute l'absolutisme de l'église, la tradition, et la monarchie pendant qu'ils recommandaient le constitutionalisme, le progrès, et la souveraineté populaire. Les citoyens français se trouvaient devant une économie débile, un manque de nourriture, et une défiance de la monarchie et, avec l'inspiration des Lumières, ils ont réagi contre le gouvernement oppressif. Le ressentiment des gens s'aggravait et l'attaque sur la Bastille le 14 juillet 1789 était le point culminant qui montrait que les Français voulaient partager le pouvoir avec eux-mêmes.<sup>2</sup>

Les changements sociaux et politiques contribuaient à la transformation littéraire. En partie, la presse recevait plus de liberté, donc, le style de l'écriture est devenu plus subjectif. Les reporters ont gagné le droit de publier les articles sans la peur d'être harcelés. Publié le 26 août 1789, la *Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen* garantit de nouvelles libertés pour les citoyens français. L'Article 11 explique l'importance d'avoir une presse sans restrictions : « La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'homme ; tout citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement, sauf à répondre de l'abus de cette liberté dans les cas déterminés par la loi. »<sup>3</sup> Pour les Français, la Révolution de 1789 influençait directement la culture littéraire. Avant la Révolution, le style prédominant était le classicisme, un mouvement caractérisé par les règles strictes. Ces règles strictes étaient parallèles à ceux de la société française. Victor Hugo a noté le lien entre les désirs du peuple et de la littérature : « La littérature est l'expression de la société. »<sup>4</sup> Pendant le dix-septième siècle et le dix-huitième siècle, la forme écrite était enrégimentée et basée sur l'ordre. Après le désordre de la Révolution, la littérature devait changer pour refléter les nouveaux sentiments. Pendant les premières décennies du dix-neuvième siècle, le mouvement romantique était formé. C'était une réaction contre le classicisme, donc, les caractéristiques du romantisme opposaient directement les marques du classicisme. Le romantisme introduisait à la littérature des nouveaux aspects comme l'individualisme, la répugnance pour la beauté typique, et le lexique original.

Hugo contribuait « une esthétique nouvelle » à la méthode d'écriture.<sup>5</sup> Il rompt les trois unités du théâtre classique : le lieu, l'action, et le temps. Dans le théâtre classique, il y avait un seul lieu, une seule intrigue, et un seul jour pendant que toute l'action se déroulait. En *Hernani*, Hugo se détachait des règles traditionnelles.

Hugo créait une pièce avec des cadres multiples : dans la chambre de Doña Sol dans le palais, dehors du palais, dans le château de Ruy Gomez, dans les caveaux d'une cathédrale, et sur une terrasse du palais d'Aragon.<sup>6</sup> La pièce est plus compliquée à cause de ces lieux parce que les nombreux lieux donnent l'opportunité à Hugo pour lier des intrigues différentes et s'écarte encore de la tradition.

Aussi, l'action est composée de plusieurs intrigues. Il y a les intrigues de l'amour et de la politique. Trois hommes se rivalisent pour obtenir l'attention de Doña Sol. Le roi, Don Carlos, veut prendre Doña Sol comme maîtresse, Don Ruy de Gomez veut se marier avec elle, et Hernani est passionné pour elle. En plus, il y a l'histoire des ambitions politiques de Don Carlos, qui a le rêve de devenir un empereur puissant. Gohin suggère que l'action d'*Hernani* n'est pas cassée ; les intrigues sont liées à la fin de la pièce, donc, l'action est unifiée.<sup>7</sup> Mais, la concession que les intrigues sont liées juste à la fin fait faiblir l'argument de unité. Si l'unité existe, ce sera certain que l'unité ne sera pas aussi forte que cela des écrits du classicisme. Ces intrigues divers font partie de la désunion du temps.

Enfin, Hugo rompt l'unité du temps : l'action fait plus d'un seul jour. L'action se déroule pendant quelques mois. Pour développer l'amour entre les amants, Hugo avait besoin de créer une histoire qui prenait plus de temps. Donc, il y a des dépaysements fréquents pour joindre les éléments de l'histoire et ces intervalles ruinent quelquefois la vraisemblance. Pour les auteurs au dix-neuvième siècle, la vraisemblance n'était pas si importante que pour les auteurs au dix-huitième siècle. Jacques Roger discute la vraisemblance et décide que quelques auteurs s'écartent trop de la réalité :

Les intrigues, romanesques jusqu'à l'absurde, y sont déterminées par un recours systématique aux ficelles du mélodrame : portes secrètes, escaliers dérobés, voix du sang, croix de ma mère, poisons et contrepoisons. La vraisemblance y est constamment défiée ... et le dépaysement dans le temps et l'espace, prétexte à l'étalage d'une couleur locale toute extérieure, ne suffit pas à estomper les incohérences et les bizarreries.<sup>8</sup>

Dans *Hernani*, Hugo joue avec la vraisemblance ; quelques parties sont réalistes, mais d'autres sont exagérées. Par exemple, au début de la pièce,

le roi, Don Carlos, se cache dans une armoire pendant que Doña Sol attend Hernani dans la même chambre. Cette situation improbable laisse se produire les événements de l'histoire, surtout l'intrigue de l'amour et la jalousie de Don Carlos. Il joue aussi avec les mots, un acte qui détruit la réalité. Après qu'elle boit le poison, Doña Sol le décrit comme « une hydre à mille dents qui ronge et qui dévore ! »<sup>9</sup> Cette image est assurément exagérée et soutient l'idée que les auteurs s'écartaient trop de la réalité. L'infraction aux règles enlève du romantisme la réalité absolue du classicisme.

Les changements de la littérature n'étaient pas tous acceptés, mais Hugo éprouvait néanmoins du succès. Son premier défi était le 5 octobre 1829 quand il a présenté son œuvre pour les Comédiens-Français et ils l'ont accepté. Une de ses autres pièces, *Marion Delorme*, n'était pas présentée parce qu'elle était censurée. Le censeur a recommandé six parties pour être censuré, mais Hugo l'a convaincu de garder quatre des six passages.<sup>10</sup> En 1830, pendant une représentation d'*Hernani* il y avait une révolte du public qui s'appelle « La Bataille d'*Hernani*. » En fait, c'était la deuxième représentation de la pièce qui produisait la réaction publique. Les Romantiques et les Classicistes se disputaient à propos du style de la pièce et son rejet des piliers du classicisme. La pièce avait du succès selon les normes de cette époque. La gloire d'*Hernani* est en grande partie à cause de cette réaction hostile qui comprendrait « hurlements, sifflements, coups de poings, intervention de la police. »<sup>11</sup>

Les œuvres de Victor Hugo remplacent l'idée de beauté des classicistes avec l'« esthétique nouvelle. »<sup>12</sup> Les classicistes faisaient les œuvres de beauté, concentrant sur l'ordre strict. Les règles ordonnaient les vers avec le rythme et le mètre précis, le vocabulaire élevé, et la balance des éléments. Cette opposition directe du classicisme et du romantisme se manifestait aux contrastes caractéristiques du romantisme. Selon Gohin, Hugo faisait la distinction entre le beau et le laid, le bon et le mal pour réagir aux règles classiques.

La fonction qu'il assignait au nouveau genre n'était rien moins que la saisie, comme en un « miroir de concentration », des conflits essentiels de la vie tout entière ; pour cela, le dramaturge devait faire apparaître la coexistence de la beauté et de la laideur en leurs paroxysmes—grâce et monstruosité, grandeur et misère, « sublime » et « grotesque. »<sup>13</sup>

Hugo fait ces changements pour changer l'idée de beauté du lecteur. Il mettait en doute les opinions conventionnelles pour faire penser le public. Par exemple, au classicisme, la forme des vers était toujours l'alexandrin, mais Hugo variait les vers pour l'effet d'accent. Dans le troisième scène de la cinquième acte, *Hernani* dit à Doña Sol :

Oh ! je suis ton esclave ! – Oui, demeure, demeure !  
 Fais ce que tu voudras. Je ne demande rien.  
 Tu sais ce que tu fais ! ce que tu fais est bien !  
 Je rirai si tu veux, je chanterai. Mon âme  
 Brûle... Eh ! dis au volcan qu'il étouffe sa flamme,  
 Le volcan fermera ses gouffres entrouverts,  
 Et n'aura sur ses flancs que fleurs et gazons verts !  
 Car le géant est pris, le Vésuve est esclave,  
 Et que t'importe, à toi, son cœur rongé de lave ?  
 Tu veux des fleurs ! c'est bien. Il faut que de son mieux  
 Le volcan tout brûlé s'épanouisse aux yeux ! <sup>14</sup>

Cette citation montre l'usage d'un « rejet », une technique de continuer une phrase dans une ligne suivante avec un seul mot ou un petit locution. Le rejet dans ce passage est « Mon âme / Brûle... », et le mot rejeté dans ce cas est « brûle ». Aussi, il y a l'opposition du beau contre le laid et l'opposition du bonheur contre le malheur. Par exemple, le passage précédent associe les rires, les chansons, et les fleurs, qui ont une connotation angélique, avec les esclaves, les volcans, et les géants, qui ont un sens méchant. Ces contrastes renforcent l'esthétique nouvelle d'*Hernani*.

On peut trouver dans les oeuvres de Hugo trois thèmes qui se répètent. D'abord, il y a souvent un sujet historique. C'est à cause du grand rôle que la politique jouait dans la vie de Hugo. En 1841, il était élu membre de l'Académie Française et puis, en 1848 et 1849, Il était élu député.<sup>15</sup> Dans *Hernani*, les thèmes historiques tournent autour de la carrière de Don Carlos et comment ses ambitions politiques contrôlent ses actions. Il veut être un grand empereur au même niveau que Charlemagne et César et il pense qu'il est trop important pour rester roi : « Etre empereur ! mon Dieu ! j'avais trop d'être roi ! » <sup>16</sup> Les événements et les personnages d'*Hernani* sont probablement suggestifs de la vie de la monarchie française et Hugo les utilise pour critiquer la royauté.

Hugo aussi donne un aspect « psychologique et moral » à l'histoire en entrant dans les pensées intimes des personnages. Barrère cite la « lutte intérieure dans l'âme de don Carlos, où l'amour et la haine font place à la dignité et à la clémence. »<sup>17</sup> En plus, le monologue de la quatrième scène du premier acte explique clairement les réflexions intérieures d'Hernani. Il explique au lecteur son désir de se venger de la vie de son père :

Va devant ! je te suis. Ma vengeance qui veille  
Avec moi toujours marche et me parle à l'oreille !  
Va ! je suis là, j'épie et j'écoute, et sans bruit  
Mon pas cherche ton pas et le presse et le suit !  
Le jour tu ne pourras, ô roi, tourner la tête,  
Sans me voir immobile et sombre dans ta fête,  
La nuit tu ne pourras tourner les yeux, ô roi,  
Sans voir mes yeux ardents luire derrière toi !<sup>18</sup>

Pour Hugo, ces thèmes psychologiques et moraux montrent sa maîtrise de l'écriture. Quand le lecteur sait les pensées de tous les personnages, cette connaissance rend l'intrigue plus dramatique.

Le dernier thème réitéré est « un drame d'amour. »<sup>19</sup> Il y a trois intrigues d'amour dans cette histoire, mais la plus captivante est celle d'Hernani et Doña Sol. L'amour d'Hernani et Doña Sol est incomparable, sauf que celle de Roméo et Juliette, peut-être. Il y a deux amants qui boivent le poison ensemble et meurent l'un dans les bras de l'autre pour rester toujours ensemble au ciel. Cet amour sans parallèle cause le lecteur de s'intéresser à l'histoire. Les autres rapports, ceux de Don Carlos et Doña Sol et de Don Ruy de Gomez et Doña Sol, sont moins centraux de l'histoire, mais ils donnent aux spectateurs les moments de tension et de suspense.

Les changements de style que Hugo faisait étaient influents pour la littérature en général. Finch cite trois caractéristiques du nouveau genre d'écriture qui étaient changés par Hugo : la politique, l'héro, et les détails modestes.<sup>20</sup> Hugo intégrait les faits spécifiques à propos de la politique, de l'histoire, et du gouvernement dans ses écrits ; il n'osait pas d'inclure des détails précis. *Hernani* est une histoire mal voilée, mais, c'est le but : Hugo voulait créer les histoires à propos de la politique française, mais il devait prendre le soin de les protéger à cause de la menace de censure. Donc, il



changeait un peu les détails et il savait que les gens reconnaissaient le sujet de l'histoire.

Hugo inventait aussi de nouveaux héros en représentant les membres de la classe pauvre comme des personnages principaux : Hernani est le chef d'une bande de bandits. A la fin de l'histoire, le prolétaire avait gagné le cœur d'une femme riche et puissante. Le point de vue aussi réagit à ce personnage ; Finch explique que « a new use of banal consciousnesses through which to reflect the narrative » faisait partie intégrante de l'augmentation de la vraisemblance du personnage.<sup>21</sup> Donc, les auteurs au dix-neuvième siècle pensaient que la moyenne est digne d'être immortalisé dans la littérature.

Le troisième concept est l'importance des détails qui étaient sous-estimés avant la Révolution. Selon Finch, ces détails « give important insights into the relationship between circumstance and individual. »<sup>22</sup> Dans la deuxième scène du premier acte, Doña Sol s'inquiète du manteau ruisselant d'Hernani. Sa réaction fait allusion à ses émotions authentiques pour lui parce qu'il est évident qu'elle est amoureuse d'Hernani. Pour les classicistes, les descriptions des vêtements trempés n'étaient pas pertinentes, mais pour les romantiques, tous ces détails ont leurs propres places.

Après la Révolution de 1789, il y a une reconnaissance de l'importance des gens de toutes les classes sociales. Selon Fauget, « [Hugo] voudrait une littérature qui ne fut pas «une littérature de lettres,» mais parlant au peuple ». Il croyait que la littérature « est l'expression de la société » et elle « formait la société. »<sup>23</sup> Les personnages de l'écriture du dix-neuvième siècle montrent l'importance du prolétariat. Dans *Hernani*, on voit l'influence qu'Hernani gagne sur les émotions de Doña Sol. Elle est folle de lui et à la fin de la pièce, les deux ne peuvent pas vivre éloignés. Par conséquent, elle boit le poison que Don Roy de Gomez destine à Hernani pour récompenser la dette qu'Hernani doit à Gomez. C'est une intrigue révolutionnaire : un homme de basse classe sociale se trouve avec une femme qui est riche, puissante, et l'image capitale de la beauté. Suivant la Révolution, la *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* a accordé au peuple les droits égaux : « Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits. Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l'utilité commune. »<sup>24</sup> Les réverbérations de la Révolution se font l'écho dans la littérature romantique.

A la fin, c'est évident que les idéaux de la Révolution de 1789 étaient continués par les écrivains du dix-neuvième siècle. Leur insistance sur

les contraires du classicisme était révolutionnaire pour la littérature comme la Révolution était révolutionnaire pour la structure sociale de la France. L'exemple de Victor Hugo montre que la littérature et la vie sont inextricablement liées.



## End Notes

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18. Hugo, 67-8.
19. Barrère, 40.
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# The Influence of the French Revolution of 1789 on the Writers and Writings of the Nineteenth Century\*

Kathryn Belmonte



The French Revolution of 1789 was truly revolutionary for France. Catalyzed by the disparity between the lower class and the upper class, the Revolution sought liberty, equality and fraternity. The writers of the nineteenth century emerged from the Revolution with increased vision and concern for the people. In fact, “[l’artiste] doit être “utile,” enseigner, éclairer, améliorer, et (en 1864) faire de la propogande démocratique.”<sup>1</sup> The writers found a new goal after the war: they should be the voice of the people and encourage the people to reflect on important issues. The new generation of nineteenth century writers broke away from the classical tradition. The works of the time, such as *Hernani* by Victor Hugo, show that these changes were a catalyst that transformed the role of literature in society and supported social causes.

In 1789, the political climate in France was turbulent. The population was divided according to social class: the clergy, the nobles and the workers formed the three classes. The workers made up the largest portion of the population, but they had less freedom than the other groups. They paid taxes and rarely received the benefits that the taxes financed. In addition, the Lumières encouraged the people to be sympathetic to social causes. The

\*Translation from French by the writer.

Lumières called into question the absolutism of the church, tradition and the monarchy while they recommended constitutionalism, progress and popular sovereignty. The French citizens found themselves facing a weak economy, a lack of food and a distrust of the monarchy, and, with inspiration from the Lumières, they reacted against the oppressive government. The people's resentment worsened and the attack on the Bastille on June 14, 1789 was the culminating point that demonstrated that the French people wanted to share power amongst themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The social and political changes contributed to the transformation of literature. In part, the press received more freedom, thus the style of writing became more subjective. Reporters earned the right to print articles without the fear of being harassed. Published August 26, 1789, the *Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen* (*Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*) guaranteed new freedoms for French citizens. Article 11 explains the importance of having a press without restrictions: "La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'homme ; tout citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement, sauf à répondre de l'abus de cette liberté dans les cas déterminés par la loi." <sup>3</sup> For the French, the Revolution of 1789 directly influenced literary culture. Before the Revolution, the predominant style was classicism, a movement characterized by strict rules. These strict rules paralleled those of French society. Victor Hugo noted the link between the desires of the people and of literature: "La littérature est l'expression de la société."<sup>4</sup> During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the written form was regimented and based on order. After the disorder of the Revolution, literature had to change to reflect new feelings. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Romantic movement was formed. It was a reaction against classicism and, as such, the characteristics of Romanticism directly opposed those of Classicism. Romanticism brought new aspects to literature including individualism, rejection of traditional beauty, and original lexicons.

Hugo contributed "une esthétique nouvelle" to the method of writing.<sup>5</sup> He broke the three unities of classical theater: place, action and time. In classical theater, there was one location, a single plot and one day during which the entire plot unfolded. In *Hernani*, Hugo breaks away from the traditional rules.

Hugo created a play with multiple settings: in Doña Sol's room in the palace, outside the palace, in Ruy Gomez's château, in the crypt of a cathedral and on a terrace at the Aragon palace.<sup>6</sup> The play is made more complicated by these locations because they give Hugo the opportunity to link different plots and again deviate from tradition.

Also, the action is composed of several plots. There are plots about love and plots about politics. Three men vie with each other to get Doña Sol's attention. The king, Don Carlos, wants to take Doña Sol as his mistress, Don Ruy de Gomez wants to marry her, and Hernani is passionate about her. In addition, there is the story of the political ambitions of Don Carlos, who dreams of becoming a powerful emperor. Gohin suggests that *Hernani's* action is not broken; the plots are tied together at the end of the play, thus, the action is unified.<sup>7</sup> But, the concession that the plots are linked just at the end weakens the argument of unity. If unity exists, it is certain that the unity is not as strong as that of the writings of Classicism. These diverse plots contribute to the disunion of time.

Finally, Hugo breaks the unity of time: the action takes more than one day. The action unfolds over a period of months. To develop passion between the lovers, Hugo needed to create a story that took more time. Therefore, there are frequent scene changes in order to join the elements of the story and these occasionally ruin the play's verisimilitude. For nineteenth century authors, verisimilitude was not as important as for the authors of the preceding century. Jacques Roger discusses verisimilitude and decides that some authors deviate too far from reality:

Les intrigues, romanesques jusqu'à l'absurde, y sont déterminées par un recours systématique aux ficelles du mélodrame : portes secrètes, escaliers dérobés, voix du sang, croix de ma mère, poisons et contrepoisons. La vraisemblance y est constamment défiée [...] et le dépaysement dans le temps et l'espace, prétexte à l'étalage d'une couleur locale toute extérieure, ne suffit pas à estomper les incohérences et les bizarreries.<sup>8</sup>

In *Hernani*, Hugo plays with verisimilitude; some parts are realistic, but others are exaggerated. For example, at the beginning of the play, the king,

Don Carlos, hides himself in an armoire while Doña Sol waits for Hernani in the same room. This improbable situation allows the story's events to occur, above all the plot dealing with Don Carlos's love and jealousy. Hugo also plays with words, an act which destroys reality. After she drinks the poison, Doña Sol describes it as "une hydre à mille dents qui ronge et qui dévore!"<sup>9</sup> This is surely exaggerated and supports the idea that authors strayed too far from reality. The infringement on rules by Romanticism replaced the absolute reality of Classicism.

Not all of the literary changes were accepted; nevertheless, Hugo experienced success. His first challenge took place on October 5, 1829, when he presented his work to the Comédiens-Français and they accepted it. One of his other plays, *Marion Delorme*, was not staged because it had been censored. The censor recommended six parts for censor, but Hugo convinced him to allow four of those six passages.<sup>10</sup> In 1830, during a performance of *Hernani*, there was a public revolt known as "the Battle of *Hernani*." In fact, it was the second presentation of the play that produced the public outcry. The Romantics and the Classicists disputed the style of the play and its rejection of the pillars of Classicism. The play was successful with regard to the norms of the time. The glory of *Hernani* is in large part due to this hostile reaction that included "hurlements, sifflements, coups de poings, intervention de la police."<sup>11</sup>

Victor Hugo's works replace the beauty ideal of the Classicists with the "esthétique nouvelle."<sup>12</sup> The Classicists crafted beautiful works, concentrating on strict order. The rules organized poetic verses with precise rhythm and meter, elevated vocabulary and an overall balance of elements. This direct opposition of Classicism and Romanticism manifested in the contrasting characteristics of the periods. According to Gohin, Hugo made a distinction between beauty and ugliness, good and evil in order to react to the classical rules.

La fonction qu'il assignait au nouveau genre n'était rien moins que la saisie, comme en un "miroir de concentration," des conflits essentiels de la vie tout entière; pour cela, le dramaturge devait faire apparaître la coexistence de la beauté et de la laideur en leurs paroxysmes—grâce et monstrosité, grandeur et misère, "sublime" et "grotesque."



Hugo made these changes to transform the reader's idea of beauty. He put into question conventional wisdom to make the public think. For example, in classicism, the form of poetic verses was always alexandrine, but Hugo varied his verses to introduce accented phrases. In Act V, Scene 3, *Hernani* says to Doña Sol:

Oh ! je suis ton esclave ! – Oui, demeure, demeure !  
 Fais ce que tu voudras. Je ne demande rien.  
 Tu sais ce que tu fais ! ce que tu fais est bien !  
 Je rirai si tu veux, je chanterai. Mon âme  
 Brûle... Eh ! dis au volcan qu'il étouffe sa flamme,  
 Le volcan fermera ses gouffres entrouverts,  
 Et n'aura sur ses flancs que fleurs et gazons verts !  
 Car le géant est pris, le Vésuve est esclave,  
 Et que t'importe, à toi, son cœur rongé de lave ?  
 Tu veux des fleurs ! c'est bien. Il faut que de son mieux  
 Le volcan tout brûlé s'épanouisse aux yeux ! <sup>14</sup>

This passage shows the usage of an enjambment, a technique that continues a single word or a short phrase from a sentence onto the following line. In this passage, the phrase “Mon âme / Brûle...” is continued over two lines, where “Brûle” is the enjambment. Also, there is the contrast of beauty and ugliness and the contrast of good versus evil. For example, the preceding passage associates laughter, songs and flowers, which have an angelic connotation, with slaves, volcanoes and giants, which have a sinister connotation. These contrasting meanings reinforce *Hernani*'s new aesthetic.

In Hugo's works, three themes consistently repeat. First, there is often a historical subject due to the large role that politics played in Hugo's life. In 1841, he was elected a member of the French Academy and then, in 1848 and 1849, he was elected a deputy.<sup>15</sup> In *Hernani* the historical themes revolve around Don Carlos' career and how his political ambitions control his actions. He wants to be a powerful emperor of the same level as Charlemagne and Caesar and he believes that he is too important to remain king: “Etre empereur! mon Dieu ! j'avais trop d'être roi !”<sup>16</sup> The events and the characters of *Hernani* are likely suggestive of the lifestyle of the French monarchy and Hugo uses these elements to criticize the royalty.

Hugo also gives a psychological and moral aspect to the story by entering into the intimate thoughts of the characters. Barrère cites the "lutte intérieure dans l'âme de don Carlos, où l'amour et la haine font place à la dignité et à la clémence."<sup>17</sup> In addition, the monologue in Act I Scene 4 clearly explains Hernani's personal reflections. He explains to the reader his desire to avenge the life of his father:

Va devant ! je te suis. Ma vengeance qui veille  
Avec moi toujours marche et me parle à l'oreille !  
Va ! je suis là, j'épie et j'écoute, et sans bruit  
Mon pas cherche ton pas et le presse et le suit !  
Le jour tu ne pourras, ô roi, tourner la tête,  
Sans me voir immobile et sombre dans ta fête,  
La nuit tu ne pourras tourner les yeux, ô roi,  
Sans voir mes yeux ardents luire derrière toi !<sup>18</sup>

For Hugo, these psychological and moral themes show his mastery of writing. When the reader is privy to the thoughts of all of the characters, this knowledge makes the plot more dramatic.

The final theme that is frequently reiterated is a love story. There are three love plots in this story, but the most captivating is that of Hernani and Doña Sol. Their love is incomparable, with the possible exception of that of Romeo and Juliet. There are two lovers who drink poison together and die in each other's arms in order to remain together in heaven. This unparalleled love causes the reader to become interested in the story. The other relationships, those of Don Carlos and Doña Sol and of Don Ruy de Gomez and Doña Sol, are less central to the story, but they provide the audience with moments of tension and suspense.

The style changes that Hugo makes are influential to literature in general. Finch cites three characteristics of the new genre of writing that were changed by Hugo: politics, the hero and humble details.<sup>20</sup> Hugo integrates specific facts regarding politics, history and government in his writing; he does not dare to include precise details. *Hernani* is a poorly-veiled story, but that is the point: Hugo wanted to create stories about French politics, but he had to take care to protect his stories from the threat of censure. Therefore, he slightly changed the details and he knew that the people would recognize the subject of the story.

Hugo also invented new heroes while representing members of the lower class as main characters: Hernani is the chief of a band of bandits. At the end of the story, a member of the proletariat had won the heart of a rich and powerful woman. The point of view also reacts to this character; Finch explains that “a new use of banal consciousnesses through which to reflect the narrative” is an integral part of the augmentation of the verisimilitude of the character.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the authors of the nineteenth century believed that the average is worthy of being immortalized in literature.

The third concept is the importance of details that were underestimated before the Revolution. According to Finch, these details “give important insights into the relationship between circumstance and individual.”<sup>22</sup> In Act I Scene 2, Doña Sol worries about Hernani’s coat, which is dripping because of the rain. Her reaction alludes to her genuine emotions for him, as it is evident that she is in love with Hernani. For Classicists, descriptions of soaking clothes are not pertinent, but for the Romantics, all of these details have their place in literature.

After the Revolution of 1789, there is recognition of the importance of people of all social classes. According to Fauget, “[Hugo] voudrait une littérature qui ne fut pas ‘une littérature de lettres,’ mais parlant au peuple.” He believed that literature “est l’expression de la société” et elle “formait la société.”<sup>23</sup> The characters of nineteenth century writing demonstrate the importance of the proletariat. In *Hernani*, one sees the influence that Hernani wins over Doña Sol’s emotions. She is in love with him and, at the end of the play, the two cannot live apart from one another. Consequently, she drinks the poison that Don Ruy de Gomez intends for Hernani to repay the debt that he owes to Gomez. This is a revolutionary plot: a lower class man finds himself with a woman who is rich, powerful and the epitomic image of beauty. Following the Revolution, the *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* granted equal rights to the French people: “Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits. Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l’utilité commune.”<sup>24</sup> The reverberations of the Revolution are echoed in Romantic literature.

In the end, it is evident that the ideals of the Revolution of 1789 were continued by the writers of the nineteenth century. Their insistence on being the opposition of Classicism was revolutionary for literature just as the Revolution was revolutionary for the social structure of France. The example of Victor Hugo shows that literature and life are inextricably linked.



# Exploring Civil Societies in the Middle East

Ambika Vishwanath



## *A Look at Iraq and Afghanistan*

The notion of a civil society is an extremely complex concept in today's world and can best be understood within the circumstances of a particular nation. Unfortunately, a single working definition does not always apply to all different cultures and peoples around the globe. This research project is designed to examine the notion of building a civil society, based on Western ideals, in the war-ravaged societies of Iraq and Afghanistan.

## *Civil Society*

The concept of a civil society is an old and much-contested idea and dates back to some of the earliest known civilizations. Social and political scientists have always worked within a two-sector framework<sup>1</sup> of the balance between the state and the economy. While this idea might have worked for centuries, it does not help in explaining some of the most important occurrences in the twentieth century, from the fall of communism and the changes in Eastern Europe to the emergence of the European Union to the changes in the attitudes of the Middle East. The old ideas of civil society that worked well in an arguably simpler world

did not take into account the factors relating to the modern ideas of public service voluntary organizations, groups such as Amnesty International or, on a smaller scale, the Afghan Women's Mission, which was set up in 1999.

Since the 1980s, there has been a debate over the working definition of a "civil society." The Center for Civil Society at the London School of Economics puts forth an operational definition, while taking into account the multi-faceted nature of the concept:

Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values...Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.<sup>2</sup>

Thus civil society acts as a buffer, in many ways, between state power and a citizen's life. Working with this definition, it is also important to note that "the state dominates socioeconomic and private affairs, intensifying the state's authoritarian tendencies,"<sup>3</sup> which is a common case in much of the developing world. Though there is the assumption that a strong civil society acts as a check on state policies, Mohan, a well-known and respected social scientist states, "That the interaction between state and civil society is that one cannot be meaningfully analyzed except in context of the other."<sup>4</sup> He rightly discusses that while a civil society might balance out state policies, it doesn't work for states that have no consistent state governments, which is true in the case of Afghanistan.

It is important to note the different components that are involved in the structuring, or restructuring, of a society. Ideals differ across borders, and the imposition of modern Western standards onto a religious, conservative community is not always the easiest, or the best, solution. In regard to the Middle East, there are several factors that must be taken

into consideration, for as Ali Abootalebi states, “oil revenues, expanded militaries, and the growing group of state bureaucrats, technocrats, and professionals have increased the state’s capabilities.”<sup>5</sup> Since the 1980s there has been an emergence of expectation of civil society and democracy in the Middle East, though there is still the false premise that the state is weak and the society is strong. In the case of the developing nations in the Middle East, connected with the building or the strengthening of civil society, especially in this part of the world, is the Western idea of democracy. In societies that are rooted in culture, it is difficult to measure autonomy, and thus it then becomes difficult to gauge the autonomous nature of socioeconomic and political groups.

In some cases, markets become an important part of fostering a civil society, as was seen in the case of the bazari class in Iran. It may be argued that the emergence of support provided by trade networks to the Taliban falls under the same context. It is also important to consider that not all civil societies are positive in nature, for as Plotz points out, “The KKK is as much a part of American civil society as Habitat for Humanity.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, in the case of traditional societies such as Iraq or Afghanistan, governments and other organizations must be on the lookout for theocratic groups, such as Mosques that promote extreme religious and ethnic cleansing ideals, laws and regulations that subjugate women and curb freedom, and any group or missions that will hinder the development of the country as a whole.

Some of the most important factors to consider when looking to build or rebuild a society are the history, religion and culture of the country and its people. While democracy may be the way of the Western world, it might not always function as effectively in certain societies. In the case of the two countries under consideration, Afghanistan and Iraq, religion in particular plays a major role within the society. Islam is deeply rooted in both cultures, though in different forms; there is, however, a growing notion that Islam can be seen as a force that can be compatible with the modernization process and democracy.<sup>7</sup>

### *Afghanistan*

A ceaseless horrific civil war in this ancient nation has disintegrated all forms of political, social and economic institutions. With the September



11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, Afghanistan has become a focus of international interest. With over two million deaths, six million displaced people and daily terrorist activities of the much-feared and still-operating Taliban, the nation is in need of outside humanitarian assistance. Ultra-conservative militant groups have destroyed the basic structure of the society while granting individuals little or no freedom and instilling a hatred of the west in children. For several years Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been some of the most vocal representatives towards the building of a viable Afghan civil society.<sup>8</sup> Several organizations such as the Afghan Transitional Authority, established in 2002, and the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, established in late 2002, all strive to sustain peace-building in the nation. What is important for these external organizations to take into account, and for forces within the country to embrace, is the significance of striking a balance between new and modern ideas, and the ancient established culture of the nation.

As a nation, Afghanistan has witnessed countless wars, external pressures, insurgencies and internal strife. Though it is a country made up of several ethnic groups, the Pashtuns are the dominant group, with Islam being the main religion. Islam was brought to Afghanistan during the eighth century with Arab invasion, and from then on the land was ruled by the Ghaznis, the Seljuks and later the Mongols. When freed in 1747, Ahmed Shah united all the different tribes, and his Pashtun clan then ruled for the next 200 years. Following years of internal strife and struggle, there then came a period of external foreign dominance, first in the form of the British Empire, then Czarist Russia, and then by the capitalistic Western world. The arrival of European imperialism into the region simply accelerated, and made more devastating, the wars, poverty and material destruction that had already wracked the region.<sup>9</sup> By the 1960s the Soviets had a long-vested interest in Afghanistan and had already waged two wars with the nation. With the Cold War at its height and the CIA paying close attention, Afghanistan became yet another battlefield between the US and the Soviet Union.

After the 1979 Soviet invasion, the US began supplying the Mujahadeen<sup>10</sup> with weapons, and by the late 1980s, the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan. One of the main allies of the US was Osama bin Laden, who later went on to help establish the militant Islamic group, the Taliban.



Once the Soviets were defeated, the CIA lost interest in the country, which then led to major fighting within the different ethnic and tribal groups. Pakistan, looking out for her own interest, helped fund the Taliban, which went on to become the dominant fundamentalist movement. Born in refugee camps, as Ritscher states, the movement composed of:

young religious students, motivated by the zeal of religion and the belief that they were ordained to bring stability and the ways of Allah back to their war-torn land. They railed against the corruption, greed and factionalism of the contending Mujahadeen factions inside Afghanistan, and when they mounted a military push to conquer the country, they were initially well received by certain sections of the weary population.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the Taliban sought to remove all traces of Western influences in the country, including eradicating all traces of freedom that women had previously enjoyed. They succeeded in defeating all opposing armed groups and, by controlling over 80% of the country, established themselves as the government. A small percent of the country's wealthy and elite who chose to stay in Afghanistan formed the opposition group, the Northern Alliance, and remained in close contact with the United Nations and other countries, with the hope that the Taliban would one day be defeated.

In response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the US and its coalition allies launched a successful attack to oust the Taliban government. It was alleged that the Taliban was harboring Osama bin Laden, who had claimed responsibility for the attacks on America. The son of a wealthy Saudi family, Osama Bin Laden has been involved in terrorist activities aimed at America and her allies since the early 1980s. He has been publicly disowned by his family for joining Afghanistan's war against the Soviets, and was stripped of his Saudi citizenship following terrorist attacks on American military bases in Riyadh. In the late 1980s, he formed the Al-Qaeda group, which claimed responsibility for the attacks on America.<sup>12</sup> The US Government laid considerable stress upon the Taliban and its leaders to hand over the wanted terrorist, but to no avail. Less than three months after the September attacks, the US, with the help

of the Northern Alliance and other countries, invaded Afghanistan and within weeks the Taliban was defeated.<sup>13</sup>

Following the defeat of the Taliban, the Bush administration helped create a transitional authority with Hamid Karzai as the leader, who became the first democratically elected president in late 2004. But the country is still in shambles, with little or no civil society in much of the land, and the people are still suffering, unable to control their own destinies. The Americans still have a strong presence in the region, and every day there are reports of deaths of either Afghans or Americans who are there to help create a stable environment. The Afghan Transitional Authority,<sup>14</sup> in conjunction with US forces and other international groups, has taken on the task of identifying civil society forces from within the country itself. It is important to remember that in the country, there are huge variations from one region to another, and between the countryside and the cities. A template based on the experience of modern Western democracies is not always a viable option. Some of the important aspects to look at are community councils, religious networks, NGOs and other voluntary organizations, and political parties.

Community councils, or *shuras*,<sup>15</sup> play a key role in Afghan history and culture, and aid agencies are seeing these local councils as important partners in community development. Traditionally, the *shuras* consisted of adult men, those of prominence in the social or economic field in their village, who would meet and discuss local problems and conflicts. As Harpviken states, "The basic perspective of the *shura* was reactive, rather than proactive."<sup>16</sup> One of the most significant *shuras* established was the *loya jirga*, which was set up under the Bonn Agreement, a part of the Interim Authority, in early 2002. The *loya jirga*—or grand council—was based on the traditional *shura*, though far more democratic in nature. Candidates were selected at the local level, and then traveled to various regions to select candidates to participate in the nationwide council. On the whole, the elections were deemed to be "free and fair."<sup>17</sup> The overall aim of the *loya jirga*, as stated by the Security Council and accepted by all parties involved, was the creation of an Afghan government that would be, "broad-based, multi-ethnic, and fully representative."<sup>18</sup> The Resolution 1378, which was passed early in November 2001, clearly stated that the U.N. would unanimously accept a multi-ethnic transitional government,

which would lead to the formation of an elected government. The idea behind the quick meeting and unanimous decision was to facilitate the appearance of order and stability in the country, and also to ensure that the United Nations would remain involved in the nation-building exercise in which America had involved herself. In many ways the resolution proved successful; three years later, the country held elections to choose a leader.

It is important to note that the conception and subsequent establishment of the *loya jirga* was a major breakthrough for Afghanistan, and was a positive step towards the building of a sustainable state. After decades of war, leaders were coming together and making decisions through dialogue and not via bullets and guns. Of course the *loya jirga* had a number of problems. Every day there are countless reports of people being threatened and leaders of shuras disappearing.<sup>19</sup> Human Rights Watch, a non-profit organization, documented problems at the *loya jirga* regarding widespread intimidation by warlords and religious leaders, and commented on the lack of international support, which is essential to the building of the nation.<sup>20</sup>

Religion has always played a major part in civil society forces in the country. In times of crisis, Islamic networks have performed key functions or formed the backbone of resistance. The Taliban, during its early stages, evolved as a reaction to the ongoing war within the country and the insecurity of the Rabbani government,<sup>21</sup> which was recognized as legitimate in only a small section of a highly fractionalized country, and enjoyed support for its initial ability to disarm warlords. It was the group's alliance with Al-Qaeda and other extreme radical movements that reduced their popular support. What is important to note, however, is that the movement began as a religious network, and was built around the ever-popular *madrassas*, or religious schools. These organizations and the mullahs, who are revered around the nation, need to be effectively channeled into productive civil society forces, for as Harpviken states, "Afghanistan will continue to see Islam as an integral part of life, and that religion may be one of the key resources for long-term reconciliation."<sup>22</sup> Religion should be encouraged in moderation while giving all ethnic groups an adequate share in political power. In 2003, critical of the interpretation and abuse of Islam for political purposes, two journalists,

Sayeed Mahdawi and Ali Reza Payam, were sentenced to death by Afghans clerics, for expressing the views that the country should adhere to a moderate interpretation of Islam. The two journalists were editors of a privately owned weekly newspaper, the *Aftab*, and were labeled as traitors and infidels by the clerics of the country. This is the sort of radical interpretation of Islam that needs to be addressed, and the government should take steps to restrain the threat of extremist views; for this is the sort of step that reminds the nation and the international community of the misdeeds of the Taliban.

The elections saw a high voter turnout and minimal violence.<sup>23</sup> However, there are still many obstacles to overcome before we can determine the success or failure of nation-building: voter intimidation, rigging of the ballots, parties accusing the officials of being biased and many others. What remains to be seen is if the new government can effectively hold onto power long enough to create national stability. A fear is that the election will “backfire,” crushing nascent attempts at building a civil society. Because there is such a massive concentration on political power, optimists hope that the recent elections provide a firm base, so the people of this ravaged nation can stand up to their tormentors and grasp the power of democracy and working society, their example offering hope to the better-educated Iraqis sitting on a sea of oil.

### *Iraq*

With the 1993 Gulf War and the subsequent invasion of Iraq by the United States-led coalition, there has been renewed international interest in Iraq. After more than three decades of brutal dictatorship by Saddam Hussein, and following the successful overthrow of his regime by the coalition, there has been a strong movement within the Iraqi political elite to rebuild the nation into a stable, working country. The Iraqi people are dealing with the aftermath of extreme religious persecution by the various extremist parties, and all organizations face overwhelming difficulty in creating a functional society. The US-led military team, along with various external organizations, is trying to build a workable society, with the ultimate aim of handing over power to an Iraqi government.

One of the main topics in the 2004 presidential election was the issue of Iraq and its ability to organize its own government. What

is important to note is that while the US troops do eventually need to leave, a reduction of their presence is impossible unless a credible Iraqi government can prove that it can defend itself from insurgents and work with an established civil society of some kind. Building a civil society, one that encompasses many facets of Iraqi society, is a daunting task, and certain steps have to be taken by the US troops, the interim government, and eventually the new government that came into effect in January 2005. One of the basic aims of exploring and establishing a working civil society is to regain rights and privileges taken away by the state. Once the people of the country feel that they have certain control over their lives—control which was taken away under the Hussein regime—the task of creating a lasting society becomes easier.

The history of Iraq shows considerable periods of constraints on the development of any workable form of government, democratic or otherwise. Beginning with Alexander the Great's invasion of Persia in 331 BC, the country now called Iraq, much like Afghanistan, has seen numerous invasions.<sup>24</sup> Islam was brought to the region, along with Arab language and culture, in 637 AD when the Arab Muslims from Arabia (today known as Saudi Arabia) conquered the land from the Persians. The Arabs soon invaded other kingdoms, spreading the influence of Islam from southern France to Asia Minor. Iraq, with Baghdad as a major city, became the outpost of the Ottoman Empire. After World War II and the defeat of the Ottomans, Iraq came under the control of the League of Nations, with her oilfields being controlled by the international community. The Iraqi people began revolting against Western influences, which spread amongst other Middle Eastern nations such as Israel, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, leading to strong sentiments of pan-Arabism.<sup>25</sup> This culminated with Saddam Hussein coming into power in 1979, which led to over twenty years of ruthless dictatorship, until his capture by U.S forces in December of 2003. After decades of brutal repression and being involved in a war that seems to have no end, Iraq as a country and a society is in complete disorder.

Prior to the creation of a workable civil society, there needs to be stability of some form. Once the coalition of troops leaves the nation, it is important for the people to feel safe. One of the most important factors that needs to be taken into consideration is the reconstruction of



the nation by defusing the appeal of insurgency to young Iraqis. It must be stressed upon the younger generation of enthusiastic males through school, religion or other such social structure that there are alternatives to violent aggression. So far, the US has failed to put into effect any form of public works program that will provide jobs for the younger population, to wean unemployed men away from the appeal of the insurgents who offer as much as \$3,000 to attack US troops and stations. As Andrew Krepinevich, a retired army officer who heads the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, states, "We ought to be putting as many Iraqis to work as possible and making them as tired as possible at the end of the day."<sup>26</sup> To achieve this, is it important to explore all forms of building a workable civil society in Iraq, just as there has been an effort to do so in Afghanistan.

After more than three decades of a brutal dictatorship, the educated and motivated citizens, though mostly in the cities, are enjoying a new-found political pluralism, one that needs to be fostered and expanded. Though the country has been subjected to innumerable car bombings, kidnappings and rapes, there has been a rapid growth in diverse groups of Iraqi society. These various groups need to be integrated into the whole, for Iraqi democracy cannot be successful without a vigorous and home-grown civil society composed of nongovernmental organizations, schools, business and others.<sup>27</sup> While a pluralist democracy might not be the best solution for Iraq, neither is an absolute retribalization; what is important is a balance between organization and state. Sudipta Kaviraj observed that in its original sense, "(civil society) allowed no distinction between 'state' and 'society' or between political and civil society: it simply meant a community, a collection of human beings united within a legitimate political order... It was Hegel who first bifurcated the concept, but in a way whereby state and civil society functioned in his account as redescrptions of one another."<sup>28</sup>

In the case of Iraq, religion plays a major role in the culture and society, for as Plotz states, "Even Islamists have discovered the importance of civil society. Islamic charities and the Saudi government have been planting Islamic schools and mosques everywhere, recognizing that their local institutions help build independent Muslim power in aggregate."<sup>29</sup> What is important to encourage is the nurturing of a more moderate group that can counter, if needed, the extreme power of the mosques. Coalition

forces, with Western ideals, should not export the idea of a separation of state and religion in its complete sense. Iraq is fundamentally religious, with much of its culture based on Islam, and has the potential to thrive by using moderate mullahs and other religious figures to gather popular support. Without an outright switch to secularization, as occurred in Turkey and India, the existing religious foundations need to be effectively used. Instead of being replaced with secular schools, religious schools (*madrassas*) should be allowed to exist, so long as they provide education in subjects such as math and science, their teachers are qualified by educational authorities, and their religious texts reflect moderate rather than virulent Islam.<sup>30</sup> In many senses the society is traumatized from remnants of fear of the Ba'ath party and Hussein's brutal dictatorship, and the idea of an "Iraqi nation" is weak. While ethnicities threaten to take the place of a national identity, religion, along with its existing social connections, can be effectively used to bring the masses together.

In July 2003, a conference was hosted by the US Department of State in conjunction with the US Institute of Peace.<sup>31</sup> The purpose of the conference was to bring together all actors interested in bringing peace to Iraq. The conference was hosted only months after the US and her allies invaded Iraq, when it became clear that America, along with the UN, would have to help create a working society in Iraq before pulling out all troops. One of the main outcomes of the conference was the recognition that the international community would play a role in the rebuilding of Iraq, starting with the establishment of law and order, and a stable security force. It is important to realize that the primary impediment to civil society is the lack of security. Death toll is on the rise every day, and remnants of Hussein's military and security forces threaten the coalition forces that remain, either through direct attacks or by sabotaging communication lines. Unless all facets of the regime are removed from everyday society, the fear will never abate, and Iraqis will not feel completely free to express themselves. Along with disbanding the army, the existing hierarchical society, a society dominated by the Ba'ath regime needs to disband as well. Once this is achieved, then the government can begin the task of creating a working society.

Plotz offers simple yet efficient means in which the society can connect, the hierarchy can be flattened and the people can come together. Promoting technology and the use of the Internet has the potential to

undermine a traditional order in a useful way. With the rapid advancement of the Internet, thousands of people can be reached all at once, which will, in turn, encourage the growth of an NGO community at lightning speed.<sup>32</sup> In addition, promoting an independent media educates and galvanizes the masses. As seen in all Western-developed democracies, it is a must for a successful civil society. This opens the Iraqis to a world beyond Iraq, "for they remain relatively isolated, in particular from non-Arab media."<sup>33</sup> For example, a few women in Baghdad who hope to lobby for women's rights can find advice via the Internet and e-mail from other groups throughout the world, and then use the Internet to reach Iraqi women within the country. Doctors, engineers and lawyers can all come together and work on building aspects of the nation, from a new constitution to public health programs to schools and universities.

Several institutions, such as the RTI,<sup>34</sup> are working to "give people a sense of civic life, thereby building institutions that, ideally, will grow long after the US leaves." Ben Saraf, an entrepreneur with RTI who lives and works in Iraq teaching democracy, encourages people to take responsibility for Iraq reconstruction.<sup>35</sup> These organizations, along with other non-governmental organizations, all need to be encouraged to start building a stable and consistent civil society in Iraq. While it is crucial for the coalition forces to leave the country, they cannot do so as they did in Afghanistan, by leaving the nation with no stable base.

Today Iraq has a democratically elected government with Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as President and Shiite Ibrahim al-Jaafari as the Prime Minister. The government is in the process of drafting their constitution, which is another major step for the country. The country has been divided into provinces, all of which are in the process of holding elections to choose local leaders. In terms of creating a democracy, these all are major positive steps for the country and the volatile Middle Eastern region. Serious attempts have been made by the elite, in conjunction with religious leaders, to bring permanence and control over the country. Yet, on the other hand, there has been an increase in suicide bombings and deaths of peacekeepers in Iraq. Every day there are reports of young radicals who are willing to martyr themselves by killing the Americans. The Bush administration has clearly stated that they will remain in Iraq till the country is stable and the killings stop, but there is a strange irony



in that reasoning. Many of the bombings occur as a backlash to the American presence, and yet without their security forces, there is little guarantee that the country will progress in a positive direction. Perhaps once the government has formally ratified the constitution, law and order can be implemented in a more forceful manner.

### *Conclusion*

This idea of civil society is an important one, and in many ways partners with the creation of a democracy. It is different for each nation, and fostering the Western, American ideals will not work in highly religious conservative societies such as Iraq and Afghanistan. American occupiers in both nations will need to distinguish amongst several kinds of civil society groups. Religion is a large factor in both nations, but moderation needs to be exercised, while security needs to be enforced. The international community, through non-governmental organizations or the United Nations, must call for further support to try to lessen the effects of long-term American occupying presence.

The quest to build a civil society has been ongoing in Afghanistan for over a decade now, and these recent elections will help indicate whether these efforts are working. The occupiers in Iraq and the government that has formed following elections in 2005 must learn from the mistakes and successes of their eastern neighbor. If not, in the short run, Iraq could wind up looking like the Bush administration's other recent exercise in nation-building: Afghanistan—primarily lawless and plagued by jihad insurgents, with government still dependent on US protection. Or perhaps it will emerge into an Arab version of Pakistan, a quasi-democracy held together by strongmen.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Center for Civil Society, "What is Civil Society," London School of Economics, 22 March 2004, <[http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what\\_is\\_civil\\_society.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm)> (25 August, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Civil Society, "Definition of Civil Society," London School of Economics, 22 March 2004, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/introduction.htm#top> (18 May 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Ernest Gellner, "Civil Society in Historical Context," *International Social Science Journal* (August 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Kristen Harpviken, "Afghanistan and Civil Society," Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 Dec. 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Ali Abootalebi

<sup>7</sup> David Plotz, "Iraq's Civil War," *Slate*. 2 May, 2003. <http://slate.msn.com/id/2082484/> (Oct, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Ali Abootalebi, "Civil Society, Democracy and the Middle East," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*. Vol 2, No.3. September 1998. <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1998/issue3/jv2n3a8.html> (August 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Afghanistan: Peace building in a regional perspective, Chr. Michelsen Institute, September 2002. <http://www.cmi.no/afghanistan/themes/civilsociety.cfm> (18 May, 2004)

<sup>10</sup> Adam Ritscher, "A brief history of Afghanistan" speech delivered in Duluth Minnesota, 2002. <<http://afghangovernment.com/briefhistory.htm>> (July, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Mujahadeen, or Holy Warriors, was initially the name given to Islamic guerillas that were fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan. The name is now given to any Islamic fundamentalist (terrorist) group, in most Middle Eastern countries.

<sup>12</sup> Adam Ritscher

<sup>13</sup> Rahimullah Yusufzai, "Wrath of God," *Time Asia* 153:1, January 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> The Afghan Transitional Authority started out as the Islamic Transitional

Afghan Administration, and is translated as a government authority in all English donor documents, such as the UN and other US government documents. In this paper the acronym ATA will be utilized.

<sup>16</sup> Shura, or Jirga, is the word of local community council, which has existed in the country for decades. At the local level they perform specialized functions, such as the mirab, who is responsible for organizing work on irrigation systems. These are seen as small, though intricate parts of civil society.

<sup>17</sup> Kristen Harpviken, "Afghanistan and Civil Society." Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 Dec. 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Annual Country Report from Human Rights Watch, 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Security Council Resolutions, UN

<sup>20</sup> News reports from *Time Magazine*, *The New York Times*, CNN, Al-Jazira and others.

<sup>21</sup> Human Rights Watch Report, 2002.

<sup>22</sup> The Rabbani Government came into power in 1992, and was heavily supported by Russia and Iran. By the mid-1990s the country was carved up amongst various factions and warlords, though the U.N and the international community continued to recognize the Rabbani Government as legitimate.

<sup>23</sup> Kristen Harpviken

<sup>24</sup> Amy Waldman, "Plan for Investigation into Afghan Election Eases Dissent," *The New York Times*, 11 Oct. 2004, sec. A3.

<sup>25</sup> All historic dates and references from [www.worldhistory.com/iraq.htm](http://www.worldhistory.com/iraq.htm), and [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

<sup>26</sup> Today the ideas of an Arab nation are felt most strongly in Syria, and the country is trying to bring other nations to form a Pan Arabic nation, a notion that is not felt as strongly by other Arab countries.

<sup>27</sup> Oct 4 issue *Time Magazine*.

<sup>28</sup> Newsbyte by Yiber Bajraktari, "Building Civil Society," United States Institute of Peace. 31 July, 2003. [www.usip.org/newsmedia/releases/2003/0731\\_NBiraq.html](http://www.usip.org/newsmedia/releases/2003/0731_NBiraq.html) (August, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, *Civil Society and its Possibilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001).

<sup>30</sup> Plotz, David. "Iraq's Civil War," *Slate*. 2 May, 2003. <http://slate.msn.com/id/2082484/> (Oct, 2004).

<sup>31</sup> Amitai Etzioni. "Religious civil society is an antidote to anarchy in Iraq and Afghanistan," *Christian Science Monitor*. 1 April, 2004. [www.csmonitor.com/2004/0401/p09s01-coop.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0401/p09s01-coop.html) (Aug, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> Held on July 17, the conference was co-hosted by the US Institute of Peace. The participants included government officials, representatives of NGOs, academics and Iraqi political leaders based in Washington. [www.usip.org/iraq/html](http://www.usip.org/iraq/html)

<sup>33</sup> David Plotz. "Iraq's Civil War," *Slate*. 2 May, 2003. <http://slate.msn.com/id/2082484/> (Oct, 2004).

<sup>34</sup> Newsbyte by Yiber Bajraktari, "Building Civil Society", United States Institute of Peace. 31 July, 2003. [www.usip.org/newsmedia/releases/2003/0731\\_NBiraq.html](http://www.usip.org/newsmedia/releases/2003/0731_NBiraq.html) (August, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> RTI, or the Research Triangle Institute, one of several NGOs in Iraq, is based in North Carolina. It is a non-profit organization whose work includes education and training for economic and social development. Source: USAID, RTI.

<sup>36</sup> Ilene Prusher, "Iraq's new challenge: civil society," *Christian Science Monitor*. 8 Oct. 2003. [www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com) (27, Sep, 2004).

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# Autonomy and Equality

Heather Ann Blain



If nothing else, Margaret Mead's first major work, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, defines the coming sophistication of American anthropology. When it was first published in 1928, just a few years after Mead had concluded her fieldwork in American Samoa, anthropology was still moving out of the era of armchair scholars and into the era of fieldwork. But with Mead's repeated and thorough fieldwork, anthropology was able to come out of the dustbin of academics and join other social sciences in examining the patterns behind modern culture.

I chose to study Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* for many reasons, including that this book has entered so greatly into our culture. My own copy I found at a local Barnes & Noble, sandwiched in between popular history and social science books. The fact that *Coming of Age in Samoa* is widely available to non-academic America almost eighty years after it was published shows the book's lasting impact on our own understanding of our culture. The questions Mead asked in 1928 still resonate, as we continue to research adolescence and the relationship between the biological and the cultural.

Current anthropologist Laura F. Klein also examines questions of gender and sexuality in her research. However, she specifically is interested in questions of power: who has power and how they use it. In addition,

she wants to know about inequalities between genders. Klein, like Mead, wants to find solutions for Western problems through fieldwork with non-Western cultures. Thus, throughout her book, *Women and Men in World Cultures*, Klein's analysis remains question-based. In particular, Chapter Five addresses the idea of inherent gender inequality. Klein wants to know whether social hierarchy is ingrained in culture. She also wants to know whether all societies subordinate women and how rank influences gender.<sup>1</sup> Although these questions may not immediately match up with the questions Mead was asking, with a close study of Mead's ethnography, the inequalities of ranked society and the female Samoan adolescence begin to link up.

However, Klein would not be interested in Mead's theory that too much choice causes adolescent turmoil. Instead, the detailed descriptions of gender roles and rank spark questions of inequality, in particular, how the Samoan adolescent girl maintains her autonomy in a ranked society. For these reasons, I will focus my discussion of Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* and Klein's questions of inequality through ranking and how it relates to young females.

Mead's ethnography of a south Polynesian island is both beautifully written and thoughtfully put together. She starts the work with a description of the popular Western views of adolescence, in which it is "characterised as the period in which idealism flowered and rebellion against authority waxed strong, a period during which difficulties and conflicts were absolutely inevitable."<sup>2</sup> Mead is not content to attribute this behavior to biology, as "neither race nor common humanity can be held responsible for many of the forms which even such basic emotions as love and fear and anger take under different social conditions."<sup>3</sup> It is for this reason that the anthropologist must go forward and conduct a human experiment on people who are different from "civilized" culture. To create this human experiment, Mead reasons that such a society is choice, as it is less complex than Western culture. For this reason, she traveled to Samoa to spend nine months of fieldwork talking to young girls. She chose girls for the ease of communication; trying to conduct interviews with the opposite gender might have caused more difficulties in an already difficult situation. But above all, Mead sought to describe the social context and individual aspirations of the female Samoan adolescent, to record her education and to reflect from it back to her own.

Mead's work is divided into chapters that show the daily context of the adolescent girl in Samoa. She starts out with a general description of

life in Samoa, then moves on to education, the household, age groups, the community, sex relations, dance, personality, individuality, deviance and the girl after adolescence. The book finishes with two chapters devoted to Mead's comments on what Western culture can learn from the Samoans. This is where Mead's analysis of both cultures comes into focus. Western culture, she argues, leaves the adolescent girl with too many ideological choices and conflicting ideas. From these many choices comes, inevitably, a period of turbulence and stress for adolescents. Only by educating young people in a more direct and clear fashion can we limit the stress imposed upon them.

The Samoan household is presided over by a *matai*, a headman. He may be a talking chief, a chief or a spokesman. In his household live many relatives who act as an economic unit. Mead describes in detail the varying ranks of the household and the ranks outside the household, but what is of specific importance is not the rankings of chiefs, but the ranking of children to other age groups, and rankings of females within their own gender. Children in Samoan society are not generally taken care of by their mother, but instead, they are taken care of by their elder siblings. Each child is "saddled" with a younger one as soon as she turns six, and has the difficult job of keeping her sibling quiet and out of the way of adults. Small boys and girls are rebuked most of all for "presuming above your age,"<sup>4</sup> and "all the irritating, detailed routine of housekeeping, which in our civilisation is accused of warping the souls and souring the tempers of grown women, is here performed by children under fourteen years of age."<sup>5</sup> Truly, Mead explains, the worst stage of a person's life is left behind once she reaches puberty and the demands of childcare.

The second ranking that greatly influences gender roles is the *taupo*. As *taupo*, a young female relative of the chief is both "the village princess" and "the village servant."<sup>6</sup> A *taupo* must be a virgin, unlike other Samoan girls, and must entertain guests and help smooth trade relations. This role is no small task, and Mead describes the royal ranks with dark language.

And so within many households the shadow of nobility falls upon the children, sometimes lightly, sometimes heavily, often long before they are old enough to understand the meaning of these intrusions from the adult world.<sup>7</sup>

After a Samoan girl has passed through the phase of irritating childcare, and if she is not influenced by the demands of a noble rank, she may retain her autonomy for as long as she remains unmarried. This relative autonomy may continue after her marriage, as Samoan society provides a childcare system which relieves grown women from the burden of much of childcare.

Unlike American adolescents of the time, the Samoan adolescent can act relatively freely in choosing whether to have sexual relations and whether to remain unmarried. Samoans are introduced to sexuality and biology at a young age, unlike American children.

Samoan children have complete knowledge of the human body and its functions, owing to the custom of little children going unclothed, the scant clothing of adults, the habit of bathing in the sea, the use of the beach as a latrine and the lack of privacy in sexual life. They also have a vivid understanding of the nature of sex.<sup>8</sup>

This “nature of sex” is different from our own. Mead recorded that there was a high rate of sexual activity among adolescent girls, but a low rate of adolescent pregnancy. Pregnancy before marriage is looked down upon by Samoans, a fact that Nicole J. Grant notes in her article “From Margaret Mead’s Field Notes: What Counted as ‘Sex’ in Samoa?” Grant points out that misunderstandings of Mead’s ethnography may stem from our own Western views of sex. The largest misunderstanding surrounds Mead’s chapter on sex relations, from which many Westerners imagine full, free sex relations from an early age for Samoans. This is not necessarily the case. Samoan women did have a more lenient view of sexuality, but this does not mean that it matches up with our own. Grant says that “the key to understanding that young women of Samoa were sexually active and were not getting pregnant when Mead was there in 1926 is found in the consideration of what *counted* as sex in Samoa at the time.”<sup>9</sup> By going back and examining Mead’s countless field notes, Grant found that sex for the majority of adolescents in Samoa meant touching with the hands and lips. Intercourse was not a prescribed part of a young person’s sexuality. The key to this system is that “masculinity in traditional Samoan culture was not a primary determinant of status.”<sup>10</sup> Males before Western influence did not feel that intercourse was necessary to make them masculine.

A girl's ability to experience sexuality without the threat of pregnancy protects her autonomy. The female Samoan adolescent does not experience inequalities with expected sexual roles. In American culture, the female is expected to refrain and provide contraceptives. In Samoan culture, this is not needed, as both parties recognize that sexuality before marriage will not consist of activities that will bring about pregnancy. Thus, for the majority of Samoan girls, sexuality does not mean pregnancy and an immediate burden: it means a pleasurable experience. In addition, Samoan girls are not tied by guilt to her first lover, unlike "the sheltered American girl who falls in love with the first man who kisses her."<sup>11</sup> Love and sex are not always one in Samoan culture, leaving adolescents with no romantic notions.

The setup of the household also contributes to adolescent girls' autonomy. After early childhood, girls are freed of the burden of childcare and can instead work on weaving mats or fishing. She has her own productive place in Samoan society, and if she disagrees with the head of her household, she can easily move to another household without much tension. This again reduces the inequalities between genders as women have the right to seek new homes and new situations, no matter their age, if they disagree with their current surroundings. Even after a girl marries and has children, she still can carry on her daily activities, as she is not responsible for a great deal of childcare. This contrasts greatly with American culture, where grown women are expected to handle all childcare within a family. This remains one of the largest tensions in adult women's lives today, as women attempt to juggle careers and childcare at the same time.

In general, Margaret Mead's Samoa is a nominally ranked society where the most influential two ranks that affect women are those of nobility and age. Because Samoa is a ranked society, gender roles depend greatly upon certain rankings, such as the *taupo*. Expected behavior from *taupo* varies widely from the expected behavior of other female adolescents. This fits with Klein's description of ranked societies, in which the norms for one segment of a gender do not fit another segment. For the Samoan *taupo*, this means that they must delay sexual relations until after marriage, and fill roles as an entertainer and trade negotiator. However, for the majority of Samoan adolescent females, inequality is not a great issue between the genders. With their autonomy intact, they are able to change households, choose lovers while remaining independent, and gain respect in their community.

There is much that Western culture can learn from *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Written for the general populace, Mead's detailed account of Samoan life shows us how our society can change for the better. With a re-examination of childcare practices to put less stress on grown women, sexual expectations of adolescents of both genders, and views of the relationship between sexuality and love, we too can attempt to have a more equal relationship between genders. This more equal relationship does not have to be one that takes away from our culture, but one that adds to it and strengthens it, helping women and men to navigate changing gender ideology.

## End Notes

1. Klein, *Women and Men in World Cultures*, (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 97.
2. Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilisation*, (New York: Perennial Classics, 2001), 4.
3. Ibid., 5.
4. Ibid., 81.
5. Ibid., 21.
6. Ibid., 55.
7. Ibid., 41.
8. Ibid., 95.
9. Grant, "From Margaret Mead's Field Notes: What Counted as "Sex" in Samoa?" in *American Anthropologist*: 97 (4), 679.
10. Ibid., 680.
11. Mead, 153.

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## A Word from the Publisher



The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

—*Alvin Toffler*

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

—*William Butler Yeats*

**A**s I sat on stage with my colleagues during the Washington College commencement this past May looking across the campus lawn at the acre of anxious graduates-to-be, their newly prepared minds wistfully awash, perhaps, in fond memory but their lives aimed at the future, I caught myself looking back at the future awaiting me as I sat at my own commencement ceremony twenty-eight years earlier. I could not then have known with any surety where I would end up decades hence, any more than these newly minted graduates could. I knew a little about the world I would be heading into, of course, not least the architecture of its superpower bifurcation and the pervading threat of nuclear annihilation and the way that this odd and nightmarish, but apparently essential, strategy of “Mutually Assured Destruction” informed so many political and social and cultural associations that governed our daily lives. Thanks to the formal education about to terminate with the receipt of a degree, I knew a little about how that world had come to be, having studied, and been tested on, patterns of its historical and sociological and scientific and literary development.

But negotiating this world with what talents and interests I possessed—that was quite another story. I had been given no formula for that, no map, no set of instructions, no fool-proof definitive “how-to,”—at least none that worked when applied. My professors at Boston College could, and did, teach a version of the world as it was then, but cautioned that we could rest assured that it would, in time, be quite different in ways even the most clairvoyant of scholars might predict.

Superpower bipolarity apparently does not last forever, and, lucky for us, it is possible for its tensions to conclude in a nuclear age without mutually assured destruction; in the wake of the twentieth century’s great conflict of ideologies, nationalism is challenged by globalization and worldwide terrorism has become the new pervasive threat. Economic plans and business strategies and literary and music theories come and go; histories are revised by new perspectives and old prejudices and the philosophical argument takes its twists and turns as it reasons our nature against the unknown. The work of Copernicus and Newton and Einstein and Hawking suggest that even the “facts” and premises of science can change radically, a point Jennifer Bockmiller makes clear in the pages of this volume in her study of the poetry of Donne and alchemy, and we are reminded in Ron Young’s cogent essay that even the idea of “home” is not so much a specific place as it is a metamorphosing state of mind. The formulas given us in the classroom help; they offer a context, indicate a way, a reasonable premise worth considering. But they aren’t static in their truths. Henry Adams said as much when he attributed the “stifling nature” of his own formal education to the rote “accumulation of inert facts.”

My fellow Boston College graduates and I would have been ill-suited for success in the world we marched into on a May afternoon in 1977 were we not ready to shift from strict adherence to the law of formula to an adept and imaginative improvisation with the ambiguous actualities around us. That much, at least, is still true today regarding the preparedness of our recent graduates. The strength of the work in this volume demonstrates the kind of curiosity and acumen and intellectual and emotional courage that cannot be taught, only recognized and

advised and guided. Together the scholarly essays and creative work in this volume of the *Washington College Review* present a testimony to that preparedness to learn anew, to unlearn and relearn, and, in the process, offer ever more light, and life, to life.

Robert Mooney

Publisher, *Washington College Review*



## Contributors



Kathryn Belmonte, class of 2007, hails from Bel Air, Maryland. As the *Review* is released, she is fulfilling one of her oldest dreams: to visit France. From this bit of information, you might make the logical guess that she is a French major, and you would be right. It's less likely that you'd guess that math is her other major along with secondary education. Kathryn would like to say "merci mille fois" to Dr. Pears for her encouragement and help while revising this paper for submission (and for letting her realize how much she loves French).

Heather Ann Blain '05 majored in anthropology and humanities. At this very moment, she is probably either eating cheddar cheese, reading a good book, or, most likely, sitting at a standstill in Baltimore-Washington traffic.

Jennifer Bockmiller graduated *summa cum laude* in '05 with degrees in English and Hispanic Studies, receiving departmental honors in both majors. Her paper, "In whom love wrought new alchemie," was written for Professor Moncrief's course, "The 17th Century." During her four years at Washington College, Jennifer studied abroad in Madrid, and participated in the English department's Kiplin Hall program. After graduation, she will be teaching high school English in Cecil County.

Jessica Cain graduated in May 2005 with honors in anthropology and Hispanic studies. She has been involved with service activities on campus and while studying abroad in South Africa and Ecuador. She moved to San Diego this summer and hopes to attend graduate school in the future. She is interested in social issues, especially related to children. She is also interested in working with non-profit organizations. She has

been involved with clubs including the International Relations Club, Spanish Club, (past officer in the prior two), dance club and Amnesty International.

Katherine M. Coots, member of the class of 2005, graduated as an art major last spring and is currently out in the real world somewhere. The piece included in this review represents a very productive semester at MICA (Maryland Institute College of Art) in Baltimore. Kate thanks Professors Jen O'Neill, Scott Woolever, and Donald McColl for their support of her work and her thesis last year. She looks forward to the road ahead, wherever it may lead.

Liam Daley is a sophomore majoring in English and drama. As an incoming freshman he was awarded the Hodson Trust and Sophie Kerr Scholarships. He is the author of several original plays, three of which have been presented at Washington College (two in the form of staged readings, one as a full production). His piece in the *Review* is a revision of his entry in the Spring 2004 Washington College Playwrights Competition. It was awarded first place by the audience and is his first piece to be published in the *Washington College Review*.

Will Grofic's ('06) origins in poetry are short and not dramatic. Will attended the University of Virginia's Young Writers' Workshop for two years in high school. Thereafter, he became editor of poetry for the annual literary magazine at his high school, Good Counsel in Wheaton. Born to Barry Grofic and Susan Adams, Will grew up in the Washington, D.C., metro area, filled with congestion, pollutants and summer days where it was hazardous to your health to walk around outside. His move to Chestertown to attend Washington College has allowed free roaming, physically and mentally.

Astra Haldeman, class of 2007, is studying art and elementary education here at Washington College. She will spend the Fall Semester of 2005 abroad at University College Cork, Ireland, where she hopes to study art history, among other things. Upon her return, she looks forward to seeing all of her friends here at WC again, flipping through this episode of the *Review*, and returning to Larrabee to learn more techniques and

improve her work. Her work pictured here, "CMSP in November," was inspired during a chilly camping trip with her friends Lou, Tara, and Dave in New Jersey's Pine Barrens, followed by a trip to their favorite beach, Cape May State Park.

Samuel Herman '05 is a native of Maryland. His hometown is Riva, which is just outside of Annapolis. He graduated with a degree in history. This summer, he attended the Critical Language Institute at the University of Arizona to study Polish. He hopes to continue his language training in the fall at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow for a year in preparation for applying to graduate programs in the U.S. He ultimately wants to get his Ph.D. in early modern European history, with an emphasis in Polish history.

M. Jeanette Kelleher graduated *magna cum laude* in 2005 with an English major and a creative writing minor. She is working to save money and intends to apply to M.F.A. poetry programs in 2006. She is interested in writing, art and music, and hopes to teach at the collegiate level and publish poetry eventually.

Anna Lodwick is an art major in the class of 2007. She plans to further her studies in the field of photography while possibly taking independent studies in fashion and accessories design. She plans to use her film from her travels to the Caribbean and Western Europe during the summer as the focus of her Advanced Photography class next fall. She is grateful that her teacher Jen O'Neill introduced her to photography and wanted to submit Anna's picture for this issue of the *Review*.

Elizabeth Rideout graduated in 2005 with a major in art.

Michael Ridgaway is a 2005 graduate with majors in physics and drama and a minor in mathematics. Though he enjoys writing, this is his first work to be published in the *Review*. Michael plans to continue writing while pursuing a master's degree in a field that combines his two diverse areas of expertise. He would like to thank Professors Timothy Maloney and Michele Volansky for their help and encouragement with this article.

Nicole Tripp graduated from Washington College in 2005 with a degree in anthropology. Her two passions at this institution have always been equally divided between art and anthropology, so she is honored to be a part of the *Review* through photography. She would like to thank Jen O'Neill for her tireless hard work in the department and her constant encouragement of her students, even ones that aren't majors.

Ambika Vishwanath graduated in 2005 with a degree in political science. A native of India, she recently had the opportunity to meet the Dalai Lama, who lives in northern India. She is currently living in Delhi, and is working on a book about her grandfather's diplomatic adventures in Tibet, a project that was blessed by the Dalai Lama himself. The published article stems from her interest in Middle Eastern politics, and in the future Ambika hopes to become a diplomat/spy for the Indian government. Perhaps one day you will hear of her adventures.

Johann Wahnnon was born in San Diego and has spent many years since moving around the West Coast. In 2000, he decided to continue his education. Again, he packed his bags and moved to Hawai'i. He attended Kapi'olani College and in 2003, transferred to WC. Two years later he graduated with a degree in history. Since graduation, he has returned to California to attend graduate school at San Diego State. With a little luck, he will soon be teaching college-level history, and the story will continue from there.

Sara Kathleen Wuillermin graduated in May 2005 with a degree in English and a minor in creative writing. While a student at the college, she was the editor-in-chief for *The Medium* literary magazine, and the *Collegian*, and was the student editor for this lovely publication last year. Sara would like to thank the English department faculty for their four years of unwavering support, the WC *Review* Editorial Board for considering her work, and Kate Amann for reminding her that she had to do this bio.

Ron Young is a senior at Washington College majoring in English and German. He is from Pasadena, Maryland. "Home" was originally a



piece written for Professor Mooney's Contemporary American Fiction course. The work is an attempt to explore the complexity of the "exile phenomenon" as well as the current attitudes toward Middle Eastern peoples. Both topics seem especially important given recent events. He would like to thank Gerry Fisher and the Washington College Writing Center staff for their unending support and encouragement and of course his friends for helping him to put his ideas to paper.

Bethany Heilman Yousefi is a senior at Washington College.

# Colophon



This issue of the Washington College Review was designed and produced using Adobe InDesign CS and Photoshop CS software with Macintosh computers. The text and heads are set in Berkeley with special characters in Zapfino Ornaments.

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